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ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS/THE BOUNCER/LE MANS 24 HOUR
BLOODY ROAR 3/WACKY RACES/ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK/MORE

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

ON THE COVER
Just look at the specs on that! Get ready for some autoerotism with the first review of the UK version of the sublime *GT3*.

ISSUE 009/JULY 2001

GAME REVIEWS

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It's here and it's amazing. *OPS2* has the first review of the UK version of the game they all have to beat.

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Survival horror meets 17th Century Japan? Oh yes. Capcom's mystic adventure hits the UK and how.

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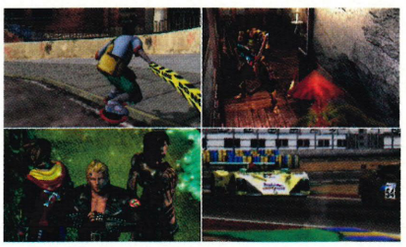
ON THE DISC

ON THIS MONTH'S DVD-ROM, WE'VE PLAYABLE DEMOS AND FOOTAGE OF THE PS2'S BEST GAMES

PLAYABLE DEMO 1/
FORMULA ONE 2001
Pole position! SCEE's *F1 2001* is a gorgeously playable, deeply satisfying racing sim. Play it only with *OPS2*!

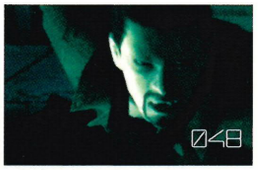
PLAYABLE DEMO 2/
RUGBY
Take on Australia as the pride of England in our huge playable demo of this slick, feature packed sports sim.

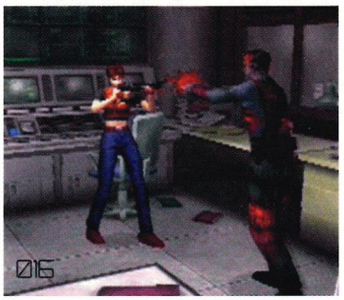
PLAYABLE DEMO 3/
WACKY RACES FEATURING DASTARDLY AND MUTTLEY
Break rules you never even knew with this killer kartoon karter.

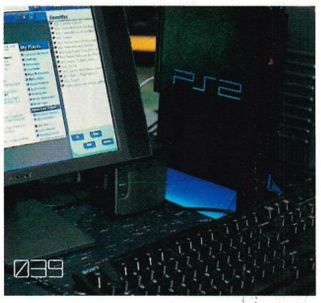


PLUS/**VIDEO PREVIEWS OF:**
Gran Turismo 3, AirBlade, Onimusha: Warlords, The Bouncer, Le Mans 24 Hours and more...

» **FULL DETAILS: PAGE 10**







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We talk to Shaun Palmer, X Games gold medallist about his extreme life and working on *Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder*.

070 **BLADES OF GLORY**
From a fistful of *Tony Hawk's* wannabes, *AirBlade* is emerging as a real contender for the boarding crown. Find out why.

074 **SPECIAL K**
Sega's first true collaboration with Sony is a mind-bending fusion of visuals and sound. We get a taste of the madness that is *K-Project*.

078 **LA STORY**
Editor Mike and Dep Ed Sam made the journey to LA last month for the experience that is E3. Read their diary of the event.

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A Sea-Doo game developed in parched, landlocked Arizona? We visit Rainbow Studios and get the lowdown on *Splashdown*.

088 **WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?**
Jak And Daxter is one of PS2's hottest forthcoming releases. We played it two weeks before it was unveiled at E3 – and we've got world exclusive shots...

GAME PREVIEWS

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Cue green baize action and smoky halls.

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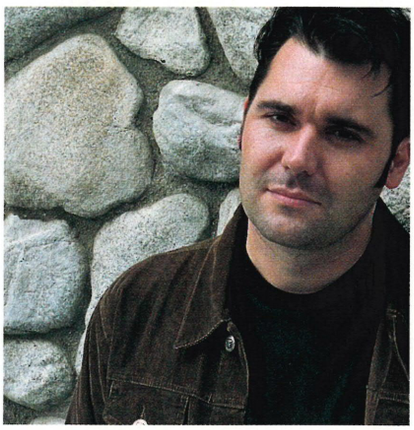
BLADES OF GLORY

CRITERION'S AIRBLADE: TONY HAWK SLAYER WITHOUT WHEELS? READ IT HERE FIRST... **PAGE 70**

EDITOR'S LETTER



Making the connection

Not that I want you to stop reading just yet but a quick trip to page 39 might be in order if you haven't read the rest of the magazine just yet. Why? Because this issue's rammed-as-ever Spy section kicks off with Sony's worldwide announcement of its online plans for the PlayStation 2.

It's a subject that's been hotly debated both in our Postal section and in the *OPS2* offices. How? Why? What? *When?* We've known off-the-record for some time that Sony would be announcing their plans at this May's E3 but as for actual details? Lips were tight. And now we know that Sony will not only be launching their 40GB Hard Disk Drive this November alongside their hybrid analogue/Ethernet Network Adaptor, but they're working with the cream of Net technology firms to make everything from Web browsing to full-blown network gaming a thing of the near rather than distant future. It's happening, and it's happening this year. To quote SCEE's Phil Harrison, "By 2002, every single SCEE-produced game will have an online component." Strewth.

Fact: This announcement will change the way we approach games on the PS2. True, it won't replace one-player in-the-zone twitch gaming or tanking your mates in MultiTap all-nighters, but it's not meant to. What it will do is expand just what we can do with our consoles. You'll be able to customise your games with digital images, statistics and MP3s for a truly bespoke appeal. You'll be able to reach out across the miles and play people in Tokyo, Texas and Tewkesbury. You'll be able to surf for gaming tips or preview levels and download them straight to Memory Card. You'll be able to instantly message taunts to your friends in *Tribes 2* or just email your mum.

In a sentence, you'll be able to do a whole lot of stuff that, while currently a mere bonus to the PS2's existing wave of games, will spark the imaginations of developers everywhere to create new and exciting worlds. Just imagine going to bed before beating that end of level boss. In the future, the Save Game info could be stored on your Hard Disk Drive and your digital enemy could text-message you 'reminder' insults throughout the day. Add voice recognition and images downloaded from digital cameras to this stew and games just got personal.

It'll take time. The technology's on its way but the real breakthrough will be how developers and gamers actually use it. The PlayStation 2 just got a whole lot bigger and it's now up to everyone to grow along with it.

MIKE GOLDSMITH
Senior Editor

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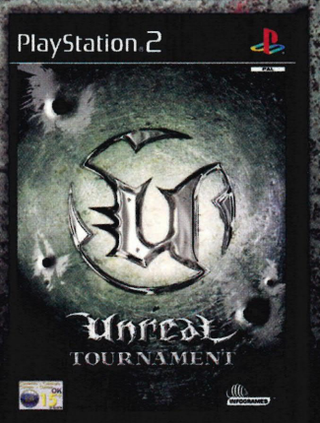
PlayStation 2

INFOGRAMES

EXIT

Nice try sucker.

Can't say you didn't make an impression. What hope did you have? A million bullets with your name on. A barrage of pulse guns to fry your flesh. A band of marauding warrior savages pursuing you through dark and strange arenas. Life is always appreciated best when it's taken.



Unreal TOURNAMENT

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PlayStation.2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

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Subscriptions are at: Future Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST BS4900, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7BR. Tel. 01458 271184

Distributed through the UK Newstrade by Seymour Distribution, 86 Newman Street, London, W1P 3LD. Tel. 020 7907 6000

Overseas Distribution by Future Publishing Ltd. Tel 01225 442244

If you had any problems finding this issue of *OPS2*, please call Regina Erak in our Circulation Department on 01225 320889

Printed in the UK by ET Heron
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We asked them what else they do. Here's their replies.

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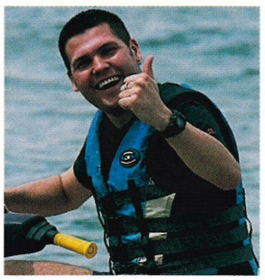


Shortly before jetting off to a land down under, for a life of sun and insanity, former Games Editor Ben got some practice in by flying off to Arizona to check out *Splashdown* for *OPS2*. While there he zoomed all over the shop on a Sea-Doo and indulged in his second favourite past time: mugging at any and every camera in a five mile radius. As you can see. Raised by a Freeman's catalogue, Ben's entire body language can be traced back to its pages. Despite this Mr Ben's rise through the ranks of videogame journalism has been relentless. Right up to the day he buggered off to Oz.

Game Of The Moment: "Couldn't give a monkey's 'cause I'm off. Or to put it another way, *ZOE*. At least it was my favourite last time I checked…"

I'm holding my breath for: "My free PS2 which still hasn't arrived yet. You will forward it to me won't you guys? Guys?"

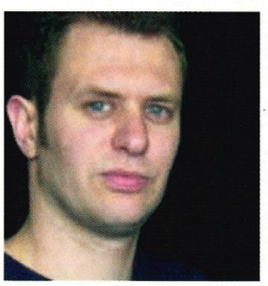
JASON BROOKES

Former *Edge* editor Jason set sail for San Francisco when he could no longer hack the 'dismal hours and pitiful recompense' of games magazine stardom. Now he's just as poor but has more time to contemplate life's quandaries – such as whether to have soy or skinny milk in his daily café latte; or if Xbox will be the first console that requires planning permission. When he's not at the beach, tending to his plants, or snowboarding in the Sierras, he seeks out the coolest games on the planet – such as United Game Artists' *K-Project* which he describes on page 76 as 'an orgy of futuristic psychedelia.'

Game Of The Moment: "Besides bouts of *Cannon Fodder* on my Game Boy Advance, *ATV Off Road Fury*. The dynamics are slightly similar to that old classic *Stunt Car Racer*."

I'm holding my breath for: "SCEI's adventure game *ICO*. It's how *Prince Of Persia* or *Castlevania* should have been done in 3D," Jason says, *Edge*-ily…

GAVIN ROBERTS

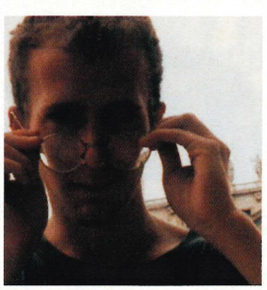


For this issue, smudge extraordinaire, Gavin Roberts took shots at E3 while for next issue, he snapped Rockstar head honcho Sam Houser in the penthouse suite of the Chateau Marmont, LA's sumptuous hotel to the rich and terminally famous. When not cavorting around the world with a light meter and an Instamatic, Gavin likes nothing better than to open a bottle of fine red wine, sling on a Miles Davis record and chill. Of the people Gavin has photographed recently, his favourite was ex-porn actress Traci Lords. Contrary to expectations, La Lords was not jaded at all, and was intelligent, funny company. Right.

Game Of The Moment: "*Quake III*. Another great way to relax after an exhausting trip and even better when combined with the red wine."

I'm holding my breath for: E3 to be washed out of his system if truth be told, but back in Gameland, our Gav says: "*GT3 A-spec*. But then again, who isn't?"

NICK ELLIS



West Country lad Nick walked into the *Official PlayStation Magazine* offices one day last year clutching a box of tea bags and a pint of semi-skimmed, enquiring if anyone fancied a cuppa. They made him a Staff Writer straight away and now he's been assigned to *OPS2* as our PSone stringer. Although suffering continual office mockery for his support of lowly Plymouth Argyle, he spends his spare time recreating great moments in the Pilgrims' history using matchsticks and is currently working on David Frio's 20th minute header against Exeter City in April. The Tate Modern has yet to call.

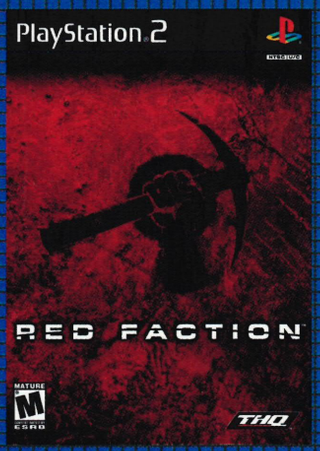
Game Of The Moment: "*GT3*. Being 27 and unable to drive in the real world is a bit sad, but who needs it when you can pilot those lovely A-spec sports cars."

I'm holding my breath for: "An official PAFC football game that combines management and playing. A mix of *LMA Manager* and *ISS* would be perfect. With a nice green cover."

STATE OF THE ART GAMING FOR NEXT TO NOTHING.

New release rental only £3.75 for 2 nights

Out on 8th June



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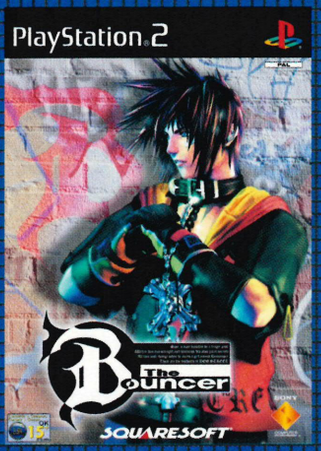

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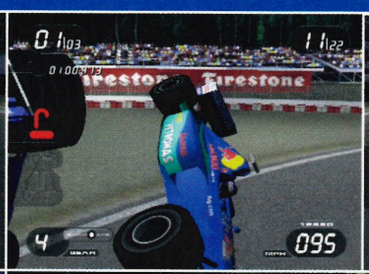
»ON THE DVD

playable demos

Other magazines let you watch, only *OPS2* lets you play...



Skidmarks, men with odd shaped balls and a bear called Blubber all feature heavily on the *OPS2* DVD ROM this month, in a playable manner of speaking. Skidmarks come courtesy of our gorgeously comprehensive *F1 2001* demo. Balls? Load up our *Rugby* demo and have yourself a rucking good time as England vs Australia. And as for Blubber boy, look no further than the frankly generous two track taster of *Wacky Races*. Then there's the usual gamut of exclusive trailers, videos and this month a first. Our very own DVD interview with *Jak And Daxter's* Jason Rubin. Excited? You will be.

Catherine Channon
Senior Disc Editor

PS To use this DVD load it up on your PS2. Then scroll between games and rolling demos with the ↓ and ↑ keys. To choose within a section use ← and →. Press ⊗ to start your choice up. Please note, you may have to reset the PS2 after some demos.

PLAYABLE DEMO ONE

FORMULA ONE 2001

Publisher: SCEE/Game type: F1 sim/Demo type: Playable/
Out: Now/Players: 1 (Full game 1-16)

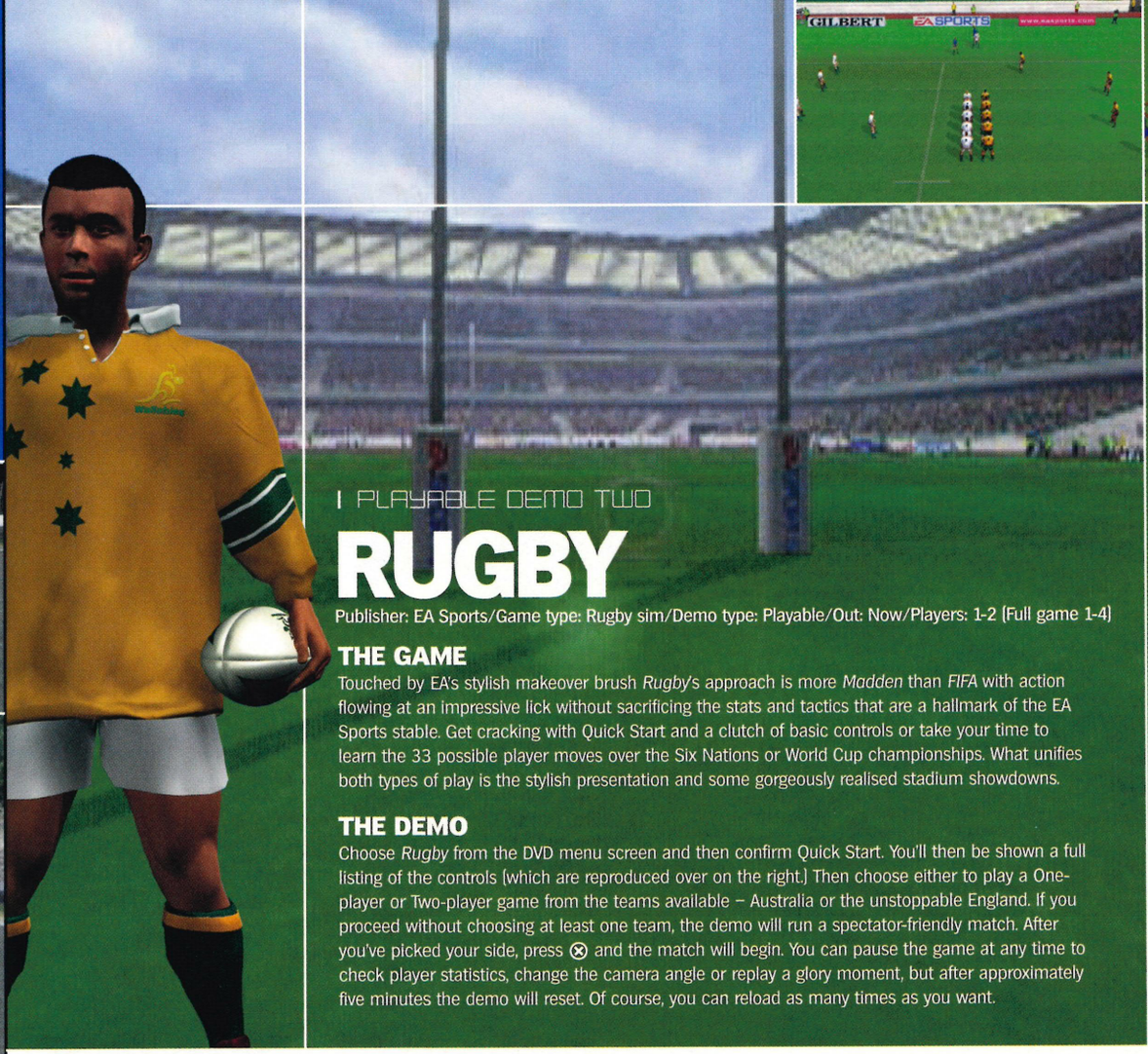
THE GAME

With *Formula One 2001* it looks like Sony have cracked the holy grail of this popular racing sub-genre. Hitting the fine balance between total authenticity and slick playability this game conjures up the entire 2001 season from Coulthard's square jaw to Murray Walker's vocal stylings without burying the driving experience in a mountain of petrol-headed minutiae. Quick races, time trials and even a 16-player post-pub time challenge are available in the full game. Even the marathon Championship mode can be taken in save friendly sections that build into a totally immersive battle for the sport's ultimate accolade. The real surprise, however, is the way the cars handle. Responsive, challenging without being discouraging, and very, very fast. *F1 2001* justifiably takes pole position.

THE DEMO

Choose *Formula One 2001* from the DVD main menu and you'll be taken, via the usual loading screens to the demo menu. There are a number of icons to highlight here, but the one you want is third from the left, Quick Race. Select this and an Options screen will open up. From here you can change the difficulty rating, tweak the display and activate the Dual Shock 2 vibration should you wish. Finish here and move to Driver Selection. You have a full choice of drivers, two per team from Ferrari to Minardi. Confirm your selection and you'll be shown the demo track. It's the Spa track in Belgium that boasts a number of tortuous bends as well as some exhilarating straights. You start the three lap race at the back of a grid of 22 drivers. There's no time limit, so you can restart the race at any time and when the final driver passes the finishing line the demo will reset.

» CONTROLS
Left Analogue Stick Steering
⊗ Accelerate
△ Change view
□ Brake
START Pause/Options menu
L2 Gear shift down (when stationary)
L1 Rear view
R2 Gear shift up (when stationary)



I PLAYABLE DEMO TWO

RUGBY

Publisher: EA Sports/Game type: Rugby sim/Demo type: Playable/Out: Now/Players: 1-2 (Full game 1-4)

THE GAME

Touched by EA's stylish makeover brush *Rugby*'s approach is more *Madden* than *FIFA* with action flowing at an impressive lick without sacrificing the stats and tactics that are a hallmark of the EA Sports stable. Get cracking with Quick Start and a clutch of basic controls or take your time to learn the 33 possible player moves over the Six Nations or World Cup championships. What unifies both types of play is the stylish presentation and some gorgeously realised stadium showdowns.

THE DEMO

Choose *Rugby* from the DVD menu screen and then confirm Quick Start. You'll then be shown a full listing of the controls (which are reproduced over on the right.) Then choose either to play a One-player or Two-player game from the teams available – Australia or the unstoppable England. If you proceed without choosing at least one team, the demo will run a spectator-friendly match. After you've picked your side, press ⊗ and the match will begin. You can pause the game at any time to check player statistics, change the camera angle or replay a glory moment, but after approximately five minutes the demo will reset. Of course, you can reload as many times as you want.

» CONTROLS

OPEN PLAY	
Run	D-pad
L1/R1	Pass left/right (with ball)
⊗	Punt/Drop kick (with ball)
□	Up and under (with ball)
△	Grubber kick (with ball)
△	Soccer kick (loose ball)
⊗	Tackle
Tap ⊗	Contest tackle
□	Change player (without ball)
○	Hand-off (with ball)
Hold ○	Sprint
R2	Defensive touch-down
Any button	Try

SET PLAY KICKS	
⊗	Kick
D-pad	Elevation increase/decrease

SET PLAY KICKS AT GOAL	
⊗	Kick at goal
D-pad	Elevation increase/decrease
D-pad	Rotate left/right
△/□	Velocity increase/decrease
L1/R1	Curl kick left/right

TAP KICKS	
⊗	Tap, pick up and run forward
L1/R1	Tap, pick up and pass left/right

PACK PLAY	
D-pad ↑/↓	Pack push/dig
D-pad ←/→	Wheel left/right (scrums)
⊗	Put-in (scrums)
△	Rake (scrums)
L1/R1	Pick up and pass left/right
L2/R2	Pick up and run left/right
△	Pass back (scrums/rucks/mauls)
○	Bind (rucks/mauls)

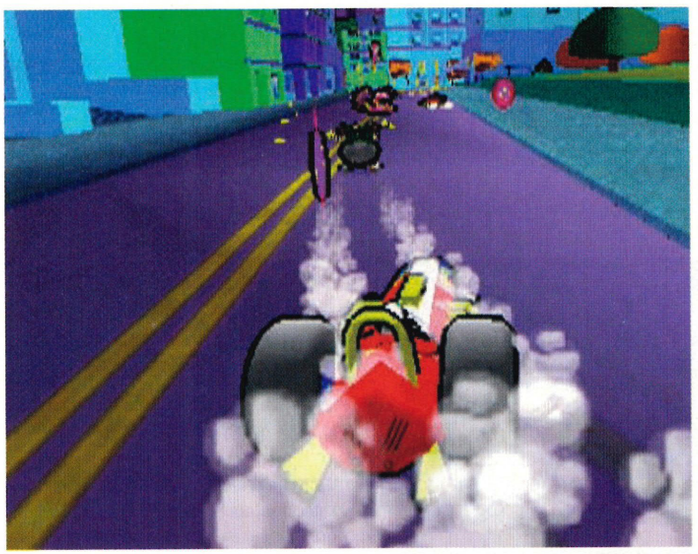
LINE-OUTS	
Any button	Throw
⊗	Catch
△	Tap-out

I PLAYABLE DEMO THREE

WACKY RACES

FEATURING DASTARDLY AND MUTTLEY

Publisher: Infogrames/Game type: Kart racer/Demo type: Playable/
Out: Now/Players: 1-2 (Full game 1-4)



THE GAME

Long before the fragrant southern belle Penelope Pitstop was menaced by the Hooded Claw these and other bizarre characters raced rings around each other in the Wacky Races. Now the premier motorsport for cartoon cheaters has arrived on PS2. With tracks taken from episodes enhanced with new urban circuits, players can choose to race as their favourite characters. Peter Perfect, the Slag Brothers, Professor Pat Pending and the Anthill Mob – they're all here. As a bonus each of the vehicles comes with an assortment of unique weapons, boosts and shields, making unfair advantages the order of the day.

» CONTROLS

Left Analogue Stick Steering
⊗ Accelerate
△ Activate power-up
○ Activate power-up
□ Activate power-up
L1 Brake
L2 Front cam
R2 Change cam

THE DEMO

Select *Wacky Races* from the main DVD menu and you'll be taken to the character selection screen. Players have the choice of either Peter Perfect in his Turbo Terrific or Rufus Ruffcut and Sawtooth in their Buzz Wagon. Once you've made your selection, confirm and you'll be given two tracks to race on. Snow Hope Village, and the spanking new PS2-only Subway Shenanigans. Take your pick, choose the difficulty setting and prepare for a power-up packed three lap race. Before you begin, however, you'll need to assign each of your vehicle's three power ups a button. You do this using the D-pad and the △, ○ and □ keys. Confirm you selections and you're away. May the sneakiest driver win.

»ON THE DVD

MORE DEMOS

Talk to us!

»Comments and queries about this cover disc should go to me, Cat, at PS2@futurenet.co.uk. Sorry, I can't answer your questions over the phone.

»If you have further problems with your disc pop the troublesome thing in an envelope and send it to the following address. We'll test it and, if faulty, send you a new CD. We're at *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Disc Returns, Customer Services, Future Publishing, Carey Court, Bancombe Road Industrial Estate, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6TB
**Remember, though, this disc will only work on a PS2.*

video previews

You've read the previews now take a look at the games in action...

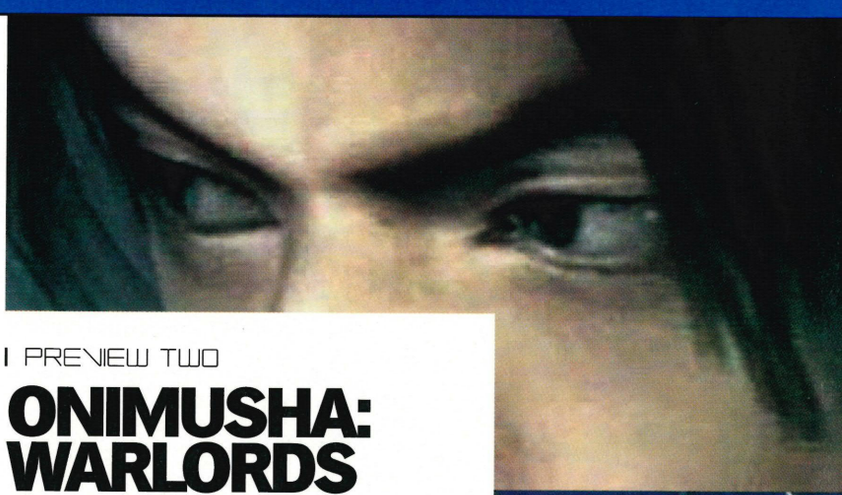
PREVIEW ONE

AIRBLADE

Publisher: SCEE/Game type: Future skateboarder/ Demo type: Preview: October/Players: 1-2

THINK SUPREME SKATEBOARD trick pulling and there's just one name that dominates the real and virtual ramps: Tony Hawk. That could well change however with Criterion's *Airblade*. The developer's masterstroke is to set the action in the near future (2015), not least because even Tony should have hung up his board by then. More importantly it allows the titular airblade to be an experimental hoverboard. Suddenly stairs become ramps, massive jumps become a reality and tricks get a lot more extreme. Boasting plot led missions and superb graphics, *Airblade* is set to ollie all over the competition.

**Want to know more? Turn to page 70 for our feature on the game*



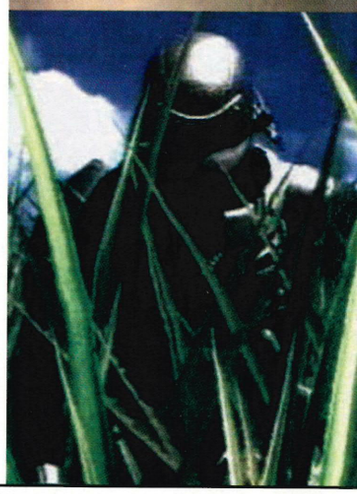
PREVIEW TWO

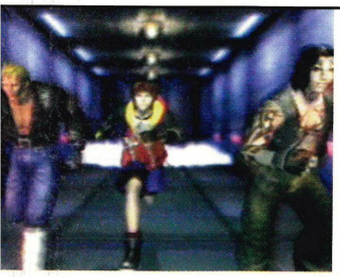
ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS

Publisher: Capcom Eurosoft/Game type: Survival horror/ Demo type: Preview/Out: Now/Players: 1

READ OUR REVIEW of Capcom's latest excursion into survival horror country and you'll probably be itching to see the fantastic intro movie mentioned within. Well, here it is. Pop it on and prepare to be dazzled. Featuring a pure hearted samurai, a princess in distress, one badly cremated moth and ooh, mere thousands of extras, this retina caressing extravaganza sets up the action of the game, as evil Lord Nobunaga returns from his recent battle defeat with a demonic army by his side. The full game takes the edgy stealth of other horror titles and puts the emphasis firmly on the proactive vanquishing of evil. Or demon twatting as it's better known.

**Our review of* Onimusha: Warlords *begins on page 102*





PREVIEW THREE

THE BOUNCER

Publisher: SCEE/Game type: Beat-'em-up/adventure Demo type: Preview/Out: Now/Players: 1-4

REJECTING THE STEREOTYPICAL black suits and thick necks of door security the world over, the bouncers at the heart of Square's ambitious beat-'em-up are an eccentric trio of sartorially-challenged good guys. When a young friend is kidnapped by a mysterious and malevolent corporation our heroes set out to get her back the only way they know how: kicking the crap out of everyone and everything that stands in their way. Linked by lush FMVs revealing an engaging plot, *The Bouncer's* fight action boasts the multiple opponent, street brawling appeal lacking in more conventional one-on-one fare. Time to step beyond the velvet rope and see for yourself.

**The Bouncer *is reviewed on page 114*

PREVIEW FOUR

LE MANS 24 HOURS

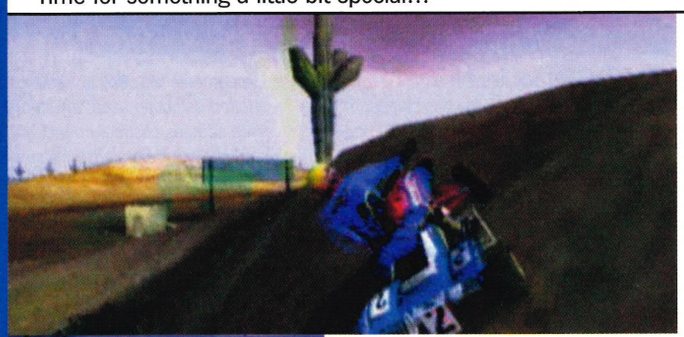
Publisher: Infogrames/Game type: Racing sim/ Demo type: Preview/Out: Now/Players: 1-2

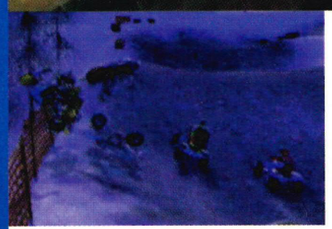
THE LE MANS COMPETITION is the ultimate test of automotive endurance while the duration of the race requires supremely tactical driving. Infogrames' racer aims to bring this unique experience to the masses with the opportunity to race all the cars on all the tracks even in real time, although taking the marathon drive in time compressed chunks is the social-life friendly option. Either way, *Le Mans 24 Hours* promises to eat race fans' free time like there's no tomorrow. Enjoy this preview.

**Le Mans 24 Hours *is reviewed on page 110*

extra

Time for something a little bit special...





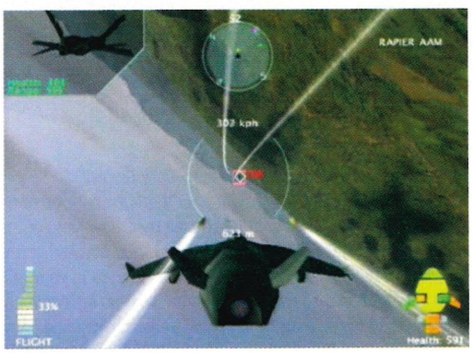
SPECIAL PREVIEW

ATV OFFROAD FURY

Publisher: SCEE

WHEN IS A BIKE not a bike? When its got four wheels, is ten feet off the ground and its driver is hanging off the handlebars performing a scissor kick. All Terrain Vehicle racing is the extreme sport of choice for nutters everywhere and *Offroad Fury* squeezes its essential, gravity defying madness into every frame. You can get a taste of this righteous offroader right here.

SPECIAL PREVIEW



DROPSHIP

Publisher: SCEE

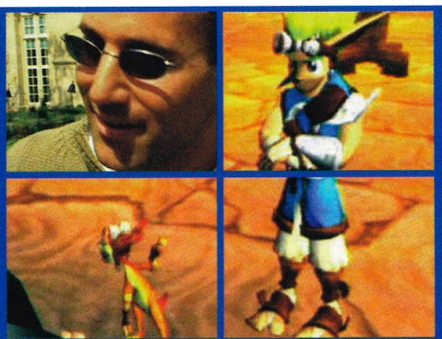
WAR MAY BE HELL but if this is anything to go by, the unbelievably bloody ballet of air and ground combat can in-fact look mighty cool. *Dropship* puts you in the thick of the action as you pilot one of four troop-carrying craft into battle in the year 2050. Touch down and you'll take control of the armed vehicle deployed on the surface and in turn the soldiers inside that. To compliment the innovative, stepped gameplay *Dropship's* graphics are positively breathtaking. Why not see for yourself?

INTERVIEW

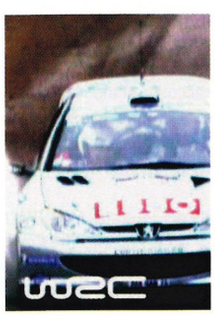
JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY (AKA PROJECT Y)

Publisher: SCEE

FILMED EXCLUSIVELY FOR *OPS2* and featuring our very own Editor, Mr Goldsmith, this interview with Jason Rubin, President of Developer Naughty Dog blows the lid off their debut PS2 game and long time information vacuum, *Jak and Daxter*. Packed with information, graphical tasters of the game and the kind of epileptic camera work that aches of disorientating cool.



SPECIAL PREVIEW



WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 2001

Publisher: SCEE

THIS MONTH THE 'frenzy of anticipation-whipping award' goes to this excellent *World Rally Championship 2001* trailer. Watch it once and you may be left thinking this *Colin McRae Rally*-baiter's priorities are nubile lovelies, sombreros and driving. In that order. Watch it again, (go on), and you'll get an in-your-face introduction to the courses and drivers that have inspired *WRC*'s developers to create the next big thing on four wheels.

SPECIAL PREVIEW

WIPEOUT FUSION

Publisher: SCEE

THE ORIGINAL *WIPEOUT* and its progeny chiselled break neck, weapon-filled, futuristic race action out of a quivering block of pure adrenaline–like pod racing with big guns and a turbo button. Starting from scratch, the franchise's next-gen debut promises similar thrills. And then some. Expansive new tracks with secret routes, ruthless evolved opponent AI and a cache of specially designed new weapons are all promised when *WipEout Fusion* screams into view. It's faster than all the rest, let us assure you. Take a look at what you're in for right now...

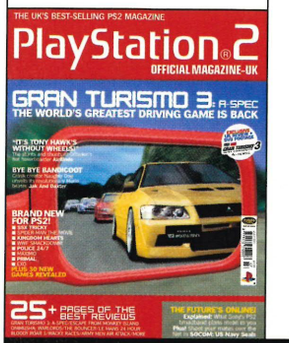
SPECIAL PREVIEW

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

Publisher: SCEE

THE PERFECT ACCOMPANIMENT to the UK's first and undoubtedly most comprehensive review of the finest racing game bar none. Serving suggestion as follows. Take one extremely comfy armchair facing TV/PS2. Set up and place the following items on an adjacent coffee table: this mag, Dual Shock 2, supply of cold beverages, eye drops. Now alternate reading paragraphs of review (begins page 94) with watching eye spanking video footage, using beverages and drops as required until state of bliss is achieved.

*Gran Turismo 3 *is reviewed on page 94*



postal

Your replies, requests, responses and rants...

Winner of the StarLetter each issue gets an exclusive *Official PS2 Magazine* T-shirt. Sadly, anyone else printed gets nowt – except, of course, the rare honour that is seeing their name in print in this fine tome. Although we're working on something else. Honest. Send those lovely letters to: Mike Goldsmith c/o Postal, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email PS2@futurenet.co.uk. Get you writing now!

AND ANOTHER THING...

Why does the PS2 have such poor online content? Apart from Daily Radar UK (**www.dailyradar.co.uk**), there seems to be little information on the Net about up and coming games. I, for one, thought that Sony would at least back their new state of the art console with an all-singing all-dancing Web site. Microsoft do and their console isn't even out yet! Every issue, people write complaining about release dates printed in your mag. Why don't you post these on your Web site so that way you can keep us informed all the time? Also, having bought every issue of the mag so far, I can't remember reading anything about the new Olympus Eye-Trek FMD-20P. I stumbled upon it while surfing the Net and would like some more information on it. On the Olympus site, it mentions a June release date. Does that mean UK and how much will it cost? I also noticed a few Web sites in Japan offering import deals. Will it work?
Steven Webster, Aberdeen, Scotland

Slow down, Steve! You want everything yesterday – a commendable attitude and thus we hope a T-shirt will satiate your desires. Some answers then. (i) There's millions of decent game Web sites out there. We cover some in our soon-to-be-expanded Internet section (page 132) but given only a small percentage of our readers are currently online, it's not a major part of the mag at present. Sony's recent online announcements (see page 39) will alter that but until then, just whack that game name into Google and follow them links. (ii) OPS2 *has big plans for online and won't launch until it's perfect. Until then, check out Sony's PS2 sections at www.uk.scee.com and get lost in the Waiting Room. (iii) Erm, who said we get lots of letters complaining about release dates? We don't – and given we go to press a month before the issue goes on sale, we're pretty damn accurate actually and way better than any other PS2 magazine. Fact. (iv) We haven't given the Olympus Eye-Trek FMD-20P an outing as the fact that Olympus haven't contacted the UK's biggest PS2 mag means they're not exactly targeting the PS2 market. We will however give them a buzz now to see what the score is re compatibility with it and PS2 (although those goggle things tend to send my eyes bonkers so George can test them). And on the subject of gadgets – how does everyone feel about reviews of the latest digital cameras, web cameras etc now the PS2 will be supporting them?*

HALF A CHANCE

I have had a PSone and a PS2 from both launches but I still enjoy playing on my PC, especially for online gaming. When I heard that *Half-Life* was to be released on the PS2, I was jumping for joy. After a while I started to think about the multiplayer options. I was wondering about the official modifications available on the PC – *Team Fortress Classic* and the fairly recently-released *Counter-Strike V1.0* and whether they'll be included as extra multiplayer options?

On *Half-Life* on the PC, anybody with a bit of programming knowledge and lots of free time can make a *Half-Life* Modification. Will this be possible with PS2 games of the future when the new Hard Disc Drive is launched? how difficult is it to learn to code in PS2's Yabasic?
Dave Deacon, via email

As a mag that too has collectively rocked the PC for online thrills, Half-Life *coming to PS2 is indeed A Good Thing. As to whether that it and other games will include the option for modification? Well, that's up to the respective developers. What works for the PC won't necessarily work for the PS2 (if only just for economic reasons) but it will come – Sony's recent online announcements (see page 39) means that PS2 games can now be online compatible straight out of the box, allowing network play and eventually the downloading of compatible content (extra weapons, worlds, characters etc). As for programming your own mod files? I imagine not, given it would take a Dev Kit to perform such enormous techy wonders. That said, you should check out Sefton's new Yabasic column on page 141. The man is a programming GOD.*

FROZEN MOMENTS

Backward compatibility has stopped me selling my 30+ stock of amazing PSone titles, but my PS2 keeps crashing while playing *Metal Gear Solid!* It's driving me crazy. Many times the game has frozen at the end credits on exactly the same screen. The CD still works fine on my old PSone. Please tell me what the problem is.
David Chisnall, Ashford, London

Hopefully when you say "at the end credits", you mean you've already saved the game before the game crashes. Still, crashing at any time is a right pain so give our pals at Konami on 0208 582 5573. As always, try the game publishers direct – you'll find their numbers in DataBase on page 143.

TO USB OR NOT TO USB

I saw in issue #04 (p24) that a *Gran Turismo* branded USB steering wheel is due for release with the game. I own a Logitech Wingman Formula Force GP with a USB connection which I use on my PC for *Rally Masters*. Is there any way to tell if this will work with *Gran Turismo 3* on the PS2? Am I right in assuming that USB is a world standard and what works for a PC also works for a PS2 (assuming the game is written to use USB)? Is force feedback also a 'standard'?
Stephen Burch, via email

At the risk of these pages turning into Q&A – Remember kids, send your well-crafted thoughts to Postal and your game/tip/hardware questions to Fitz over at Q&A – here's your reply. The new GT3 *wheel is basically a re-branded version of the Formula Force GP so it should work.*

CANDID CAMERA

I am 13 years old and I already own an expensive digital camera. It isn't PS2-compatible and I can't really afford to splash out £700 on Sony's brand spanking new CyberShot and wondered if you knew of any cheaper compatible cameras?
John Walles, via email

You're 13 and you've got "an expensive digital camera"? Strewth, it weren't like that when I were a... Anyway. John, who's to say your camera isn't PS2-compatible? Japanese PS2 titles such as Golf Paradise DX *have used software compatible with the CyberShot but there's no reason why games can't utilise any digital camera that can be plugged into the iLink or USB ports – indeed, SCEE's cool R&D experiments (See Spy in issue #05) with motion detection used any standard USB Web camera, costing around £40. Wait and see, you'll be pleasantly surprised.*

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS?

Hi, I've just completed *Shadow Of Memories* and feel that Ian Evans in 'You Got It Wrong, Son!' (issue #07) has missed the point of the game. Why should all games have 'great gameplay'? Isn't there room for titles that dare to be different? He's right in that *Shadow Of Memories* doesn't have gameplay in the generally accepted sense, but it's an experience akin to reading a book in which you are the main character. Well done, KCET for being brave enough to produce it. Anyway, I'm off to plant flowers instead of a statue to see if that makes a difference.
Mik Towse, via email

Cheers for that, Mik – not everyone wants twitch gaming, not everyone likes panic driving and (whisper it) not everyone prefers ISS *to* FIFA *(although they should do). At* OPS2, *we try to score things on various merits and we think* Shadow Of Memories *more than deserved its score for the sheer vision it showed. Our postbag show KCET's spooky time-traveller split the PS2 crowd just as* Shenmue *(it's nearest neighbour) did on the Dreamcast. In a sentence? It's not* R-Types, *everybody, so don't expect it to be.*

IT'S A QUESTION OF TIMING

Congratulations on an excellent magazine which I believe could be enhanced by including playable demos that supplement the reviews in the magazine during the same month. This would make it possible to take account of the reviewers comments whilst being able to trial the game and make a personal judgement.
Mark Twigg, Rotherham

Sadly, it's not up to us, Mark. We most definitely want to get to the time where this is the case (we tried and succeeded with this on OPM*) but at the moment, production schedules, technical issues and general getting-their-games-out-on-time hassles means demos are arriving a little late – and protest though we do, it's the game developers that make the demos, not us. Trust us when we say we're trying to make your request happen – why not give us a hand and write to the addresses at the DataBase in EndGame (page 143) and give 'em a nudge too?*

IN THE FRAME

I know that you must have had loads of people asking you about the Hard Disc Drive, but does it come with more VRAM? I hope that it will because the PS2 will reap the benefit of extra video memory. The first person shooters that are out at the moment are good, but each game has a specific problem. In *Unreal Tournament*, there's a frame rate problem, *TimeSplitters* doesn't have enough texture on the levels and players, while in *Quake III Revolution*, the graphics are top, the control system works, but you can only have about 5-6 players at a time in a Deathmatch. *Quake III Revolution* needs to have 20-30 players at once on single game.
David Robinson, via email

For a full explanation of VRAM, take a walk to Q&A on page 139 for the lowdown on this and more answers to all your game/tip/hardware questions, but don't expect the answer to lie just in technical specs. It's more to do with developers getting more and more out of the PS2, learning as they go and gamers reaping the benefits. Remember when they launched the Performance Analyser for PSone, a programming tool that allowed programmers to see how their in-development games could squeeze more out of the system? Two things. (a) The first PSone title to benefit from this was a little game you may have heard of called Gran Turismo. *(b) They've just announced a new version for PS2.*

I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW

A lot of PS2 games have a decent next generation look, and there's little doubt that the PS2 can spawn amazing graphics, but one bug is the low quality of the textures, which generally look really blurred like N64 games (not that bad of course, but you get my point). When you look at games that are available on the PS2 as well as on the PC, there's a big difference. *Unreal Tournament* is a year and a half old on the PC, while the PS2 version still looks inferior in every way mostly because of this blur.

The *Giants* video on last months DVD also looked far inferior to its PC brother. When I heard of all the promises that PS2 would be capable of I sure as hell expected it to blow away even the best PC graphics of the moment. How is this possible and will things get better in time, as developers better learn to get to grips with their programming tools? I certainly hope so. Some of the second generation titles such as *Starfighter, Red Faction* or *Super Bombad Racing* also suffer from it and I'm starting to get a bit worried that as in the same way the PSone had its pixel graphics, the PS2 will bear the blur-burden throughout its existence. Wasn't the PS2 intended to kill those nasty things like fogging, blur and low frame rates with it's near-infinite power and razor sharp graphics? Please prove me wrong.
Bart De Poortere, Belgium

We can but give you pretty much the same answer as our one for the last letter, Bart, but with an extra bit of info – from your choice of Giants *and the not-out-when-you-wrote-this duo of* Super Bombad Racing *and* Red Faction, *you're judging a game's final performance from the video previews on our cover disc. While the quality is excellent (and improving every disc, thanks to SCEE's Special Projects and QA Departments), it can never truly replicate the real game, especially given the preview is just that, ie footage taken from an unfinished version of the final game. All that said, you do have a point and we repeat, developers are getting far, far better at the PS2 – compare the looks of* ZOE, GT3 *and* Quake III *to earlier games such as* Ridge Racer V *and* Unreal Tourney. *As for "near-infinite power"? Hey, don't believe* all *the hype.*

BOXING CLEVER

Just a quick letter about the Xbox and the people who write in to your magazine about it. I mean, what's the point writing into your fantastic magazine just to talk about a console that probably won't even be out this year. I mean, where's the point in that?
Matt C Lisburn, via email

Matt, we love you man.

POSTAL – EXTRA

Byte-sized chunks from the *OPS2* digital postbag.

Shirley Neary on email wins this month's unnecessary questioning award when she begs to know if a list of games as long as her very long arm will be coming to PS2? Turn to our Spy section now, girl! She's also stuck on the free *MGS2* demo and would find a walkthrough useful. Our sister mag, *OPM* ran a walkthrough of the *MGS2* demo in their May issue (#71). Call 01458 271126 to order yourself a back issue. **Aiden Rogers** from Devon starts his missive by berating us for *Soul Reaver's* slipping release date. And it's out fault the weather's been foul lately too, Aiden. **Harry Potter** (?) wants to know when *The Bouncer, Metal Gear Solid 2* and *FFX* are released. Now, Feb 2002 and no release date as yet., Harry. **John Fitzgerald** on email wonders what he needs to play import CDs on his UK PS2 apart from a 60Hz telly and RGB leads and whether a Game Shark or an Action Replay 2 would work with the set-up?
Well John, we've got some bad news for you. You need an NTSC PS2 to play import games, they aren't compatible with a standard UK PAL PS2. And finally... **Jools** on email loves the mag but feels that our DVD footage is more grainy and of an inferior quality to sister magazine, *PSM2*. She wonders why. Well Jools, sometimes game footage is supplied by publishers on ye olde video tape. When that happens, the step down in quality is noticible when the footage is transferred to DVD. The good news is this is now almost a thing of the past. See this issue's disc for evidence.

THIS TIME, IT'S NOT WAR

I was wondering whether any *Command & Conquer* games are coming out on PS2? You'd think they'd be an obvious choice. I'm a fan of Westwood's hit series and would like to see games like *Red Alert 2* on my new magic black box – any chance? I also would like to say that your mag is fantastic – however, I think that you should feature more than two or three demos a month. Oh, and the *MGS2* demo is brilliant and I reckon that all games should be as detailed as it.
Andrew Charlton, via email

Glad you dig the mag, Andrew, and we too are intoxicated by Kojima's gorgeous stealth-'em-up. As for C&C, *Westwood are currently hard at work making* Pirates Of Skull Cove *for EA, with none of their trademark war games currently on the PS2 radar. Check out page 42 of this current issue for the lowdown.*

SOME QUESTIONS

1) What is the 'Find My Own Way' video on the PS2 demo disc of? 2) How did Kevin Egget in Postal in issue #07 record to a MiniDisc from *Music 2000* on PSone when the PSone has no USB Ports?
James Canning, via email

Some answers, James.
1) That'll be the music from one of Emotion 3: Adrenaline, the latest of SCEE's 'visual poems' to show off the power of PS2. For MTV Music Generator, *check last issue's disc for the real deal.*
2) You don't need the USB, James. We assume Mr Egget hooked up a composite lead from the AV Out of his PSone into the Mic port on his recordable MiniDisc. Kev?

To be eligible for the StarLetter prize, remember to include your full name and address. *OPS2* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and style.

back issues

Want to get your hands on the issues people are discussing in Postal? Come raid our warehouse for issues you've missed. All issues feature playable demo discs.

FIVE Exclusive look at *The Getaway*, reviews of *Oni* and *Knockout Kings 2001*, plus a playable demo of *GT3: A-spec*.

SIX: Exclusive UK review of *Star Wars: Starfighter*, a huge playable *ZOE* demo on the disc, Sega on PS2 and *Onimusha* previewed.

SEVEN: World exclusive *Crazy Taxi* review, playable demo of *Star Wars: Starfighter, Herdy Gerdy* feature and *Fur Fighters* preview.

EIGHT: *Red Faction* reviewed, Shinji Mikami interview, *Crash Bandicoot* preview, *Dropship* feature, *MTV MG2* on the disc.

To order back issues of *OPS2*, write to *Official PlayStation 2* Back Issues, Future Publishing, Cary Court, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 6TB, or call 01458 271184. Back issues are priced £5.99 (UK), £6.99 (Europe) and £7.99 (Rest of the World). Supplies limited.

PREVIEW CONTENTS

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Back where it belongs, the original and best survival horror triumphantly returns to PS2

20 **World Championship Snooker 2001**
Balls, baize, critical frames, Ronnie O'Sullivan and a lot of stifled coughing

22 **CART Fury**
Raw, petrol fuelled aggression and blatant rule breaking. It's Indy Car racing and it's angry

24 **Victorious Boxers**
A boxing title with a story line? Experience the drama of the big fight at every level

26 **City Crisis**
Uh oh, the city's in crisis! It's up to you in your rescue helicopter to save it

28 **UEFA Challenge**
After *FIFA* and *ISS* comes this latest football sim. Will you be going for gold?

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X

WORDS: ADRIAN LAWTON

Capcom's seminal survival horror series returns to the fold with an exclusive PS2 version of a Dreamcast classic.

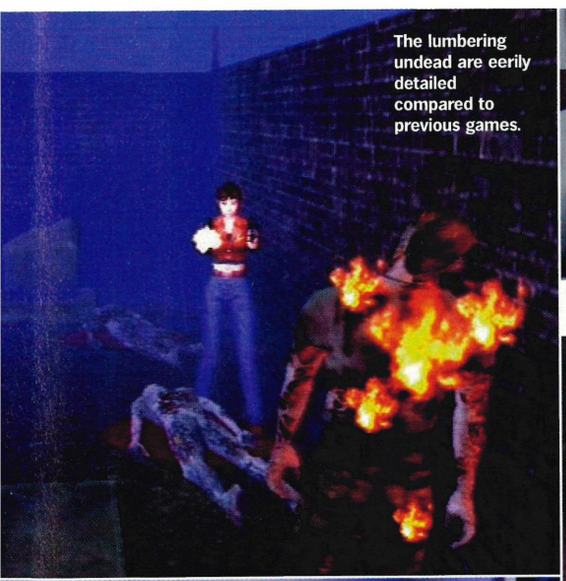
Publisher: Capcom Eurosoft
Developer: Capcom
Players: 1
Release: August

Having temporarily defected to Dreamcast, *Resident Evil* is finally back where it belongs and where it's given so much delight to millions of gamers over the last six years. Yes folks, *Code: Veronica X*, the latest and greatest instalment in the legendary series, is about to lurch onto your PS2 in an updated version featuring some exclusive elements for the Sony faithful. Anyone who has yet to experience the delights of decapitating a zombie with a pump-action shotgun should prepare for some horrific thrills.

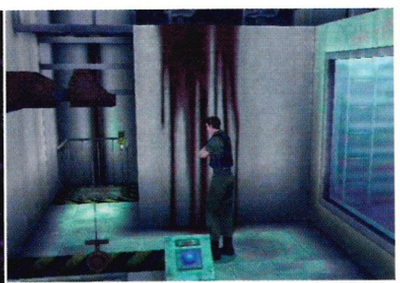
Picking up the story shortly after the events which occurred in *Resident Evil* 2, the adventure begins with Claire Redfield continuing the search for her brother Chris, a member of the elite S.T.A.R.S. police force who has been missing in action since the original game. After the trail leads her to the Umbrella Corporation's headquarters in Paris, a showdown leads to her capture by hostile troops.

She awakens in a darkened prison cell on a remote island penal facility owned by the shadowy Umbrella organisation. An outbreak of the deadly T-Virus has reduced the island to ruin and turned its population into a nightmarish community of evil monsters. Your predictable task is to guide Claire past hordes of undead freaks to safety, aided by the usual arsenal of pistols, Uzis, rocket launchers and such like. But things are never quite that simple in *Resi* land and as you'd expect, you'll also have to unmask a horribly sinister narrative and negotiate a number of cryptic puzzles. So, in effect, everything we've come to know and love about the series.

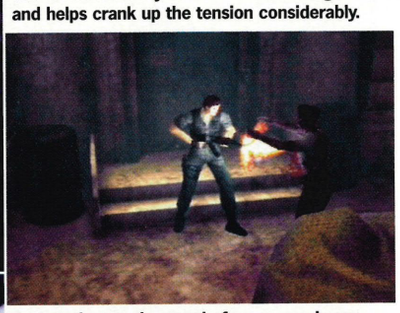
After breaking free from incarceration and illuminating your surroundings with a lighter it becomes immediately obvious just how far the series has progressed visually since *Nemesis* for the PSone. The real-time flame casts flickering shadows on detailed textures, tiny insects scurry up the walls as you approach and Claire herself is all the more realistic for the much higher polygon count that the PlayStation 2 allows.



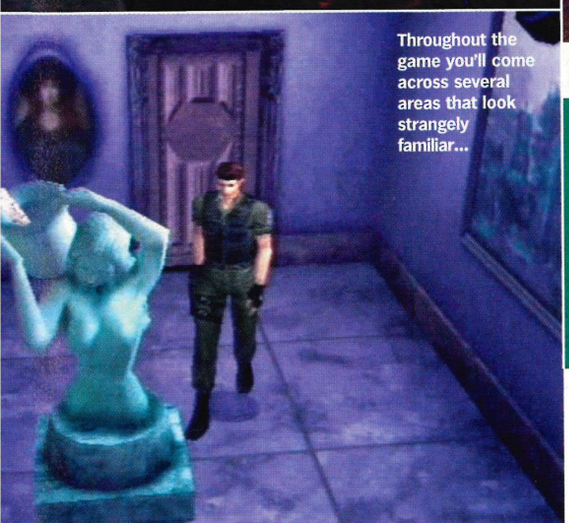
The lumbering undead are eerily detailed compared to previous games.



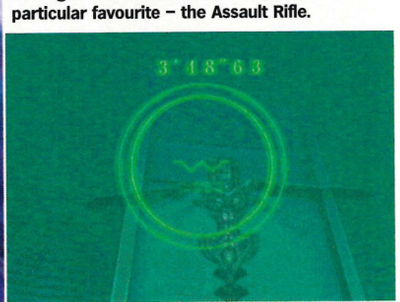
The world around you is full of disturbing detail and helps crank up the tension considerably.



Among the usual arsenal of weaponry is our particular favourite – the Assault Rifle.



Throughout the game you'll come across several areas that look strangely familiar...

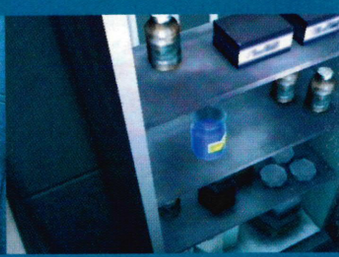


Boss encounters are real nail-biters and all the more unnerving with the improved visuals.

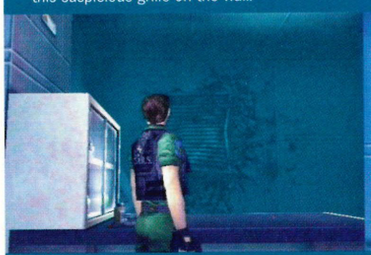
PANIC ACTION

Here's just one of numerous heart-pounding moments in the glorious *Code: Veronica X*.

1. As Chris enters this Lab we can see this suspicious grille on the wall.



2. But nothing happens – until we remove this chemical from the fridge.

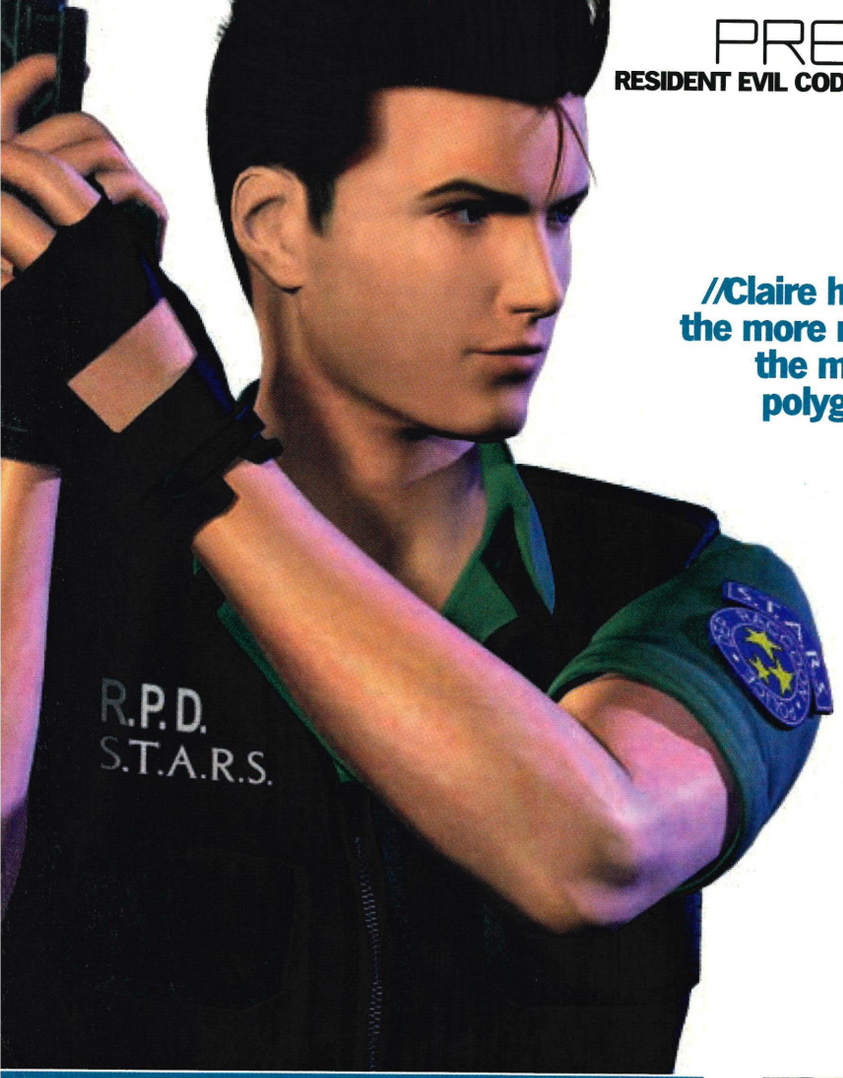


3. Then we hear a noise and the camera pans to focus on that part of the room.

4. The grille starts to groan and strain and unpleasant-looking claws emerge.

5. The metal is torn away to reveal a poisonous Hunter in all its hideous glory.

6. Take the Hunter out before it grabs Chris with them venomous talons!



//Claire herself is all the more realistic for the much higher polygon count//

Of course, the game's creatures are also vastly improved and this is confirmed in your very first encounter, when rotting cadavers erupt from the ground in a graveyard. Surrounded by maggot-ridden monstrosities and armed only with a knife, you'll have no option but to beat a hasty retreat until later. It's certainly familiar territory, but it's so much more convincing than before that your palms will be sweating like a vampire on a blind date with Buffy.

SHOCK TACTICS

From this first shock attack onward there's no time to catch your breath, because in *Code: Veronica X* you'll find a lot more beasties to contend with than ever before. Zombies, elastic-armed Bandersnatches, Hunters, giant spiders, vicious hell-hounds, poisonous moths and not forgetting the usual assortment of incredibly hard bosses along the way (like the deadly Tyrant that Claire encounters in the confined space of a plane's cargo hold). They're all gruesomely realised and just waiting to take a chunk out of you.

Aside from its detailed visuals, another major improvement in *Code: Veronica X* is in the dynamic camera. No longer is it restricted to fixed angles by the use of pre-rendered backgrounds, the PS2's next-gen technology providing it with the benefits of true 3D environments, enabling a far greater freedom of movement for the game camera.

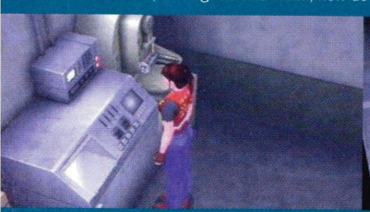
What this means in practice is that the developer has been able to keep tension levels tourniquet tight by cutting from fixed perspectives to sweeping motions which track the character's movements, depending on what most benefits the current situation. Whether the camera is tracking Claire along a corridor as she flees a zombie attack, or is fixed at an angle so you can't quite see what's waiting around the corner, the cinematic nature of the game is unsurpassed.

It isn't just the camera that produces surprises. As ever, there are countless set-pieces where the shocks come thick

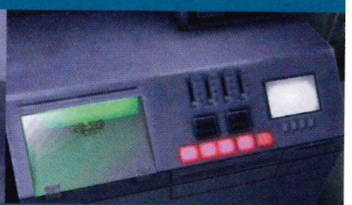
LATERAL THINKING

Cast a zombified eye over a typical *Resi* brain-teaser.

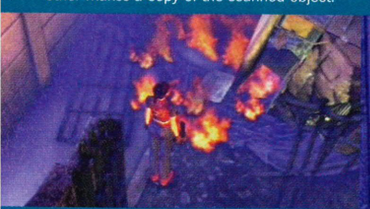
In order to progress to a new area, Claire must find a medallion to unlock a gate. She discovers the medallion but the building it's located in is fitted with a security system whereby all metallic items must be placed into a box or shutters will come down, barring the exit. Hmm, how do we get around this one?



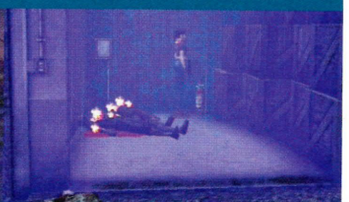
1. Check these two machines located near the medallion. One is a 3D scanner, the other makes a copy of the scanned object.



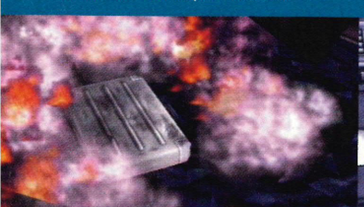
2. Scan the medallion in the first machine. Now we need to find some non-metallic material...



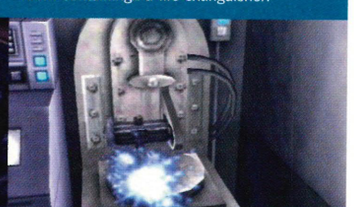
3. Outside we can see a case trapped within the flames surrounding a burning truck. But how do we put out the fire?



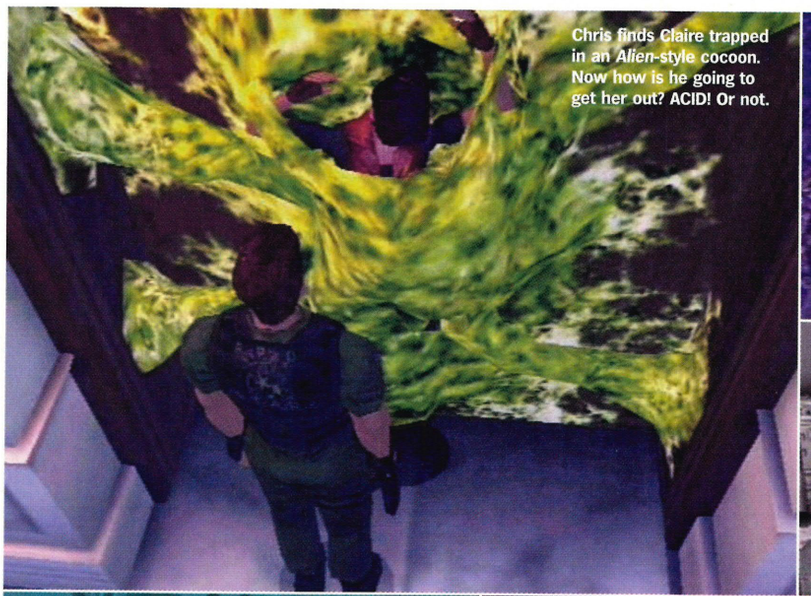
4. Track back to the building and open the shutter around the side to reveal a room containing... a fire extinguisher!



5. Use it to put out the flames, then examine the case to reveal a material called TG-01 hidden inside.



6. Head back to the machines, put the TG-01 into the copier and make an exact, non-metallic replica of the medallion.



Chris finds Claire trapped in an *Alien*-style cocoon. Now how is he going to get her out? ACID! Or not.

Those spiders just seem to keep on getting bigger and bigger. Watch out for the flying acid, man...

When Chris finally arrives at the island, he finds it in an even worse state.

and fast. In one particularly memorable moment at the Antarctic base, Chris must empty a tank full of water to retrieve a key that lies at the bottom. After descending the ladder into the tank, Chris bends down to pick up the key. Suddenly, the glass front smashes and a poisonous Hunter pounces, leaving you desperately trying to aim the weapon before it rips out Chris's throat. It never fails to make you jump, even when you know what's coming.

The game's environments, despite being more processor-heavy in three dimensions, are incredibly striking. From the decimated South Atlantic prison island and Military Training Facility, through the bizarre Ashford Mansion and onto the abandoned Antarctic base, you'll be continually impressed by the bleak and ominous worlds you have to explore. Flies buzzing around a lamp, handprints smeared in blood on the walls, corpses trapped in silky insect cocoons and the Bates Motel-style profile of the Ashford's private residence. They all add to the fear-drenched atmosphere and keep you hooked right to the macabre finale.

TWISTED? YES. DISTURBING? YES AGAIN

With 16 hours of gameplay promised, reaching that final scene will take much longer than you'll be used to. As in *RE 2*, you won't just be controlling the one character either. Claire's brother Chris plays a considerable part and you'll also get the chance to take charge of Steve Burnside, who becomes Claire's companion for much of the game. There's even a Battle mode to be discovered once you've finished the adventure which lets you play from a first-person perspective.

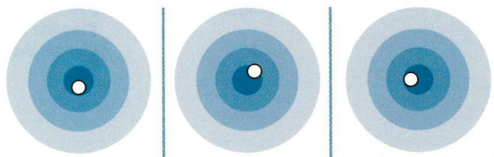
The narrative too is a definite evolution, and appears to be much deeper than before. Delving into the twisted lives of the founders of Umbrella, the Ashford family, you'll have the dubious pleasure of meeting the psychopathic, gender-bending Alfred and his domineering sister Alexia as you slowly unravel the threads of the story.

It's in the story where those exclusive PS2 aspects come into play. Veterans of the original *Resident Evil* will undoubtedly remember the double-crossing machinations of rogue S.T.A.R.S. member, Albert Wesker. While he appeared in the Dreamcast version of *Code: Veronica*, the true significance of his involvement was never really fully explained. Capcom has addressed this for the PS2 release by including extra scenes featuring the villainous mercenary. They don't alter the game radically but they should give the story more closure, tying up all the loose ends and make it a more satisfying experience. In short, *Code: Veronica X* will be the definitive version.

Cynics may criticise Capcom for releasing an updated version of a Dreamcast game instead of a completely new, platform specific title. But the fact of the matter is that a great game is a great game, regardless of its origins or age. Twisted? Yes. Disturbing? Most definitely. But in a way that's so consistently elegant it leaves you dribbling in admiration at the imagination and sheer genius of Shinji Mikami and his team at Capcom – even though it may not bring much new to the tried and tested *Resi* formula. The best survival horror game yet seen is hiding just around the corner... And it's very hungry. □

ON TARGET? RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X

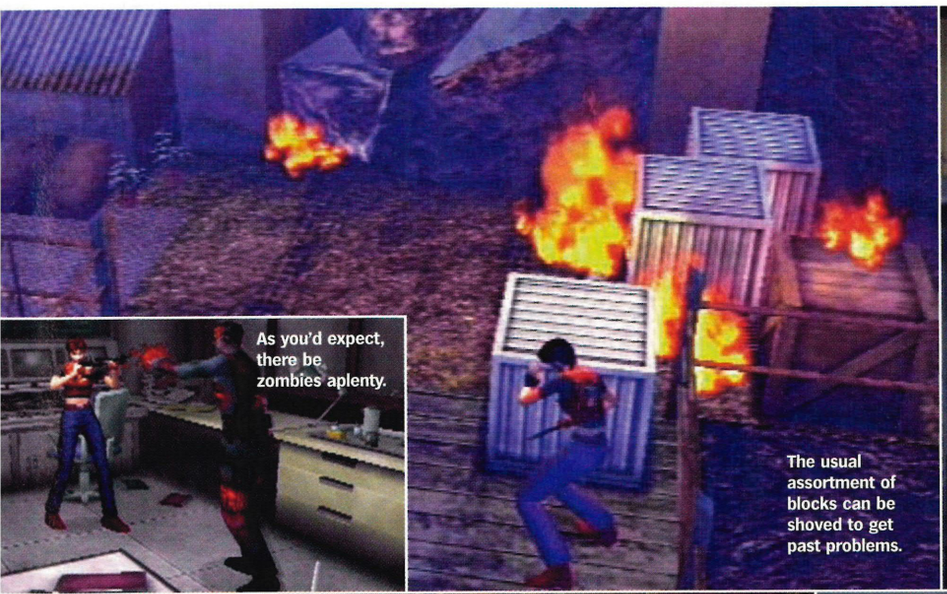
Not an entirely new or original title but its heritage, absorbing gameplay and out-and-out horror should make this a guaranteed hit.



GRAPHICS
Horrific, sinister and awe-inspiring. An utter tour-de-force.

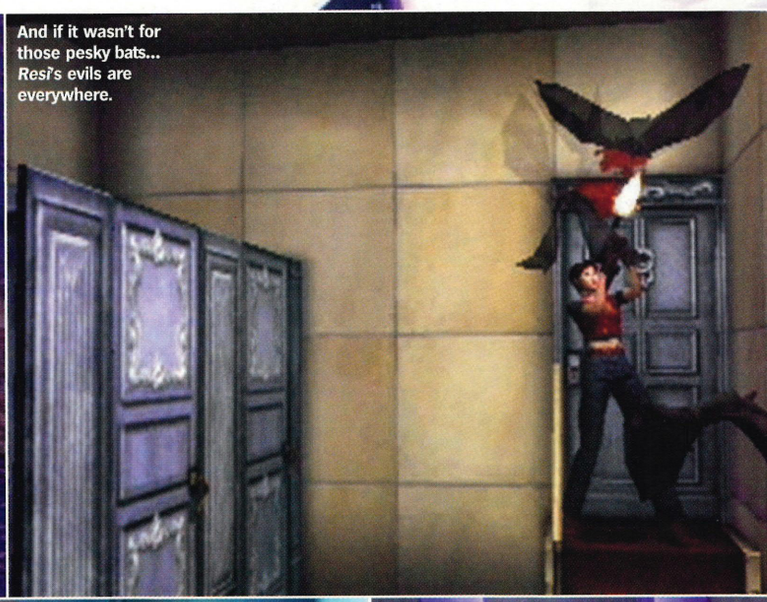
PLOT
The most engrossing and cinematic story in the series so far.

SHOCKS
More edge-of-the-seat moments than Liverpool vs Alaves.

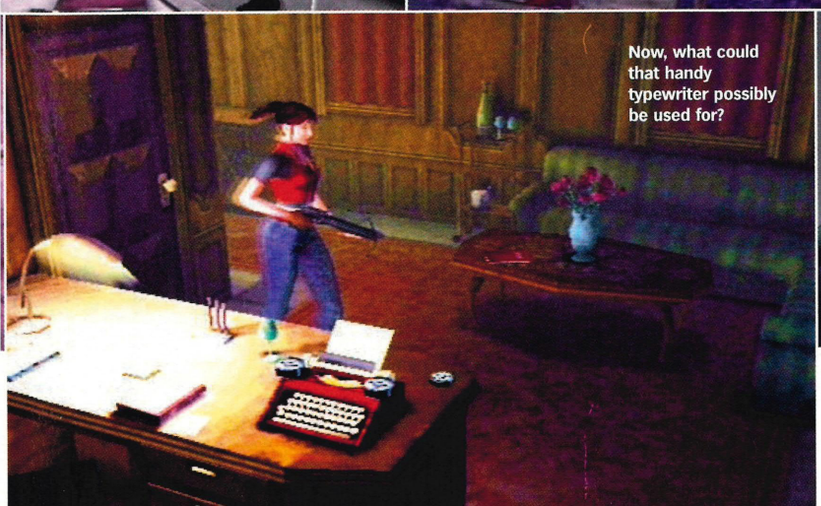


The usual assortment of blocks can be shoved to get past problems.

As you'd expect, there be zombies aplenty.

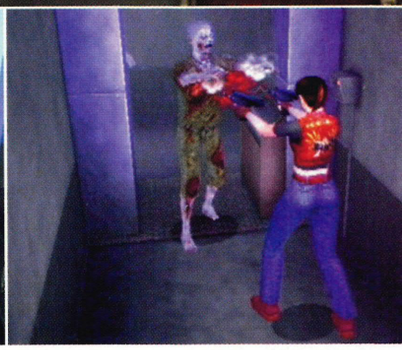


And if it wasn't for those pesky bats... *Resi*'s evils are everywhere.



Now, what could that handy typewriter possibly be used for?

Code Veronica **is full of neat touches, like the traces left by these guys' eyes as they walk off.**



You want it? Do you? Do you really? Then have it you shall, sirrah!

WORDS: NICK JONES

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2001

To the uninitiated, snooker just means one less TV channel to watch on a Friday night. This game hopes to change that and convert a few unbelievers.

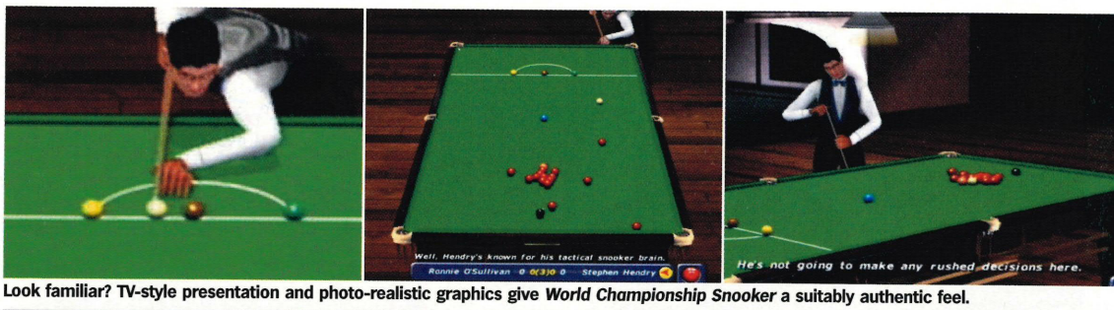
Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Blade Interactive Studios
Players: 1-2
Release: July

Watching Ronnie O'Sullivan take on John Higgins at the recent World Snooker Championship proved one thing about snooker – at its best it can be a totally absorbing experience. Granted, it's almost inexplicable how two men hitting balls around a table can possibly be passed off as entertaining but oh, the tension! Oh, the pressure! Oh, the pale white skin from spending too much time indoors!

Fortunately this official license, an update of last year's PSone game, has all the elements of the game that can make the sport so enjoyable. All the best players, the venues and most importantly, TV-style presentation and commentary from Dennis Taylor. More impressively the developer has managed to give the snooker balls and tables an almost photo-realistic quality. It appears that less attention has been paid to the players though, currently looking like thin versions of the real thing, and moving around like they're on Beta Blockers.

Although there is a certain novelty attached to playing as a real-life pro like Stephen Hendry or Mark Williams, more satisfaction can be gleaned from playing as yourself and doleing out a thrashing. This is where *World Championship Snooker*'s excellent Career mode comes into its own. Here you have the option to design your own player and then take him through the ranks of world snooker, playing in a variety of tournaments from the China Open all the way to the World Snooker Championship at The Crucible.

The main downside to the game is inherent to the sport – pace. Namely the time spent waiting around for your go. Make the slightest of errors against one of the top players and you could be twiddling your thumbs for the next 20 minutes as you watch Mark Williams slowly but surely compile a frame winning break of 130. This isn't exactly what we'd call thrill-a-minute gameplay, but then that's the price you play for not having any friends to play against.



Look familiar? TV-style presentation and photo-realistic graphics give *World Championship Snooker* a suitably authentic feel.

Q&A

TABLE MATTERS

We take Peter Jones from Blade Interactive to the table and ask him a few questions.

What kind of input did you get from the players featured in the game?
We had loads from professional players, from the WSA and Cue Masters who also modelled for the motion captured animation. From this we have tweaked it. Simple stuff like cushion rebound and the knap of the baize running in one direction. The players take our game very seriously.

Do the videogame versions of the world's top snooker players play like their real-life counterparts?
Yes. We have talked to the players, spent hours poring over video footage and getting the AI to work in that manner. I'm not talking about obvious stuff for example whether a player is right- or left-handed. We have looked at the nuances, the inflections. For example a player's propensity to play safe in a given situation or go for the shot. We have looked at big match temperament and the consistency of the player. It's our job as game designers to make the player feel like he/she is really playing Ronnie O'Sullivan.

How has the game improved in comparison with the PSone version?
The PS2 is a great machine. It has allowed us to progress the game in ways which we could only dream of on PSone. The game has more players, more venues and new modes of play including a totally interactive Coaching mode where the player is talked through a game by Dennis Taylor and some really cool, fun games. Graphically we have gone to town to make the visuals look photo-realistic. We have some nice touches like full interactive shadows on the players.

How does the interactive Coaching mode work?
The tuition is arranged in six phases. First the player is told what ball to strike and why – not every shot is an attempt at a pot. Then the camera zooms in on to the cue ball and the player is told where to strike the ball. Next a box appears to show where the cue ball should end up. After the shot you are given a breakdown of how successful it was.

What, in the game, are you most proud of?
I could answer that in a number of ways – list all the really cool stuff, starting with the physics, the endorsements and ending up with the photo-realistic graphics. But I'm personally most proud of the fact that we have a game that is so much fun that even non-Snooker Championship viewers want to play it.

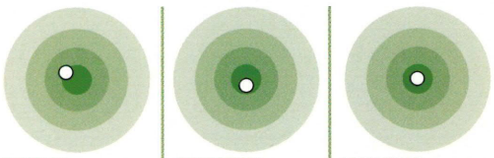
We assume that you guys are massive snooker fans... Who's your favourite player and why?
My personal view is Ronnie. The man is a genius in his own right but at the same time he's an inconsistent genius. Ronnie's great to model for a computer game as he's the best in the world yet he can and does on occasions fluff a shot to let the player back in. If he didn't exist I think we'd probably have to invent him anyway in the interests of good gameplay...

There is still work to done on the player AI as currently computer players, especially some of the better ones, have a habit of playing particularly outrageous shots. Like hitting the white up and down the table twice, eventually striking the pink and potting it in the middle pocket. Only a computer would even dream of playing a shot like that. It's inevitable though that in the finished game the virtual John Higgins will be just as boring as the real one. Players should act in the same style as their real-life counterparts – so expect tactical snooker from Nigel Bond and risk-taking shots from Ronnie O'Sullivan.

If you've ever braved a smoky snooker hall chances are you will be aware the sport can be a difficult one at the best of times. The whole point of this game is that it enables you to compete against the best in the world and actually look like you know what you're doing rather than mindlessly hitting balls around a table. It has all the players and tournaments, and balls that behave exactly as they should. Because of its realism, its ease of use and *that* theme music *World Championship Snooker 2001* will doubtless turn a few fresh faced PS2 owners into pale, lethargic shadows of their former selves. But then that's snooker for you... □

ON TARGET? WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2001

Snooker may lack charismatic celebrities, excitement and potential to do 'big airs', but as a thinking man's sport this title should do it justice.

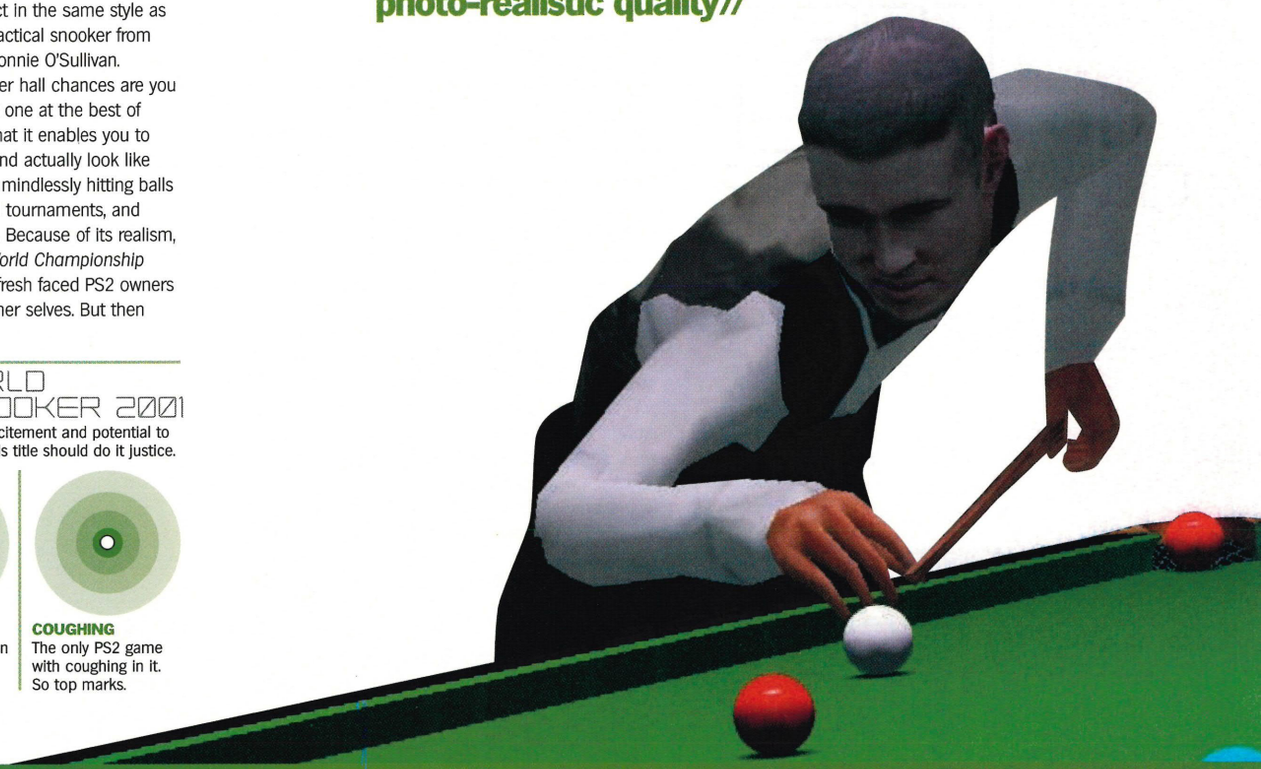


PHYSICS
Pretty much spot on. The cushions seem a bit heavy, though.

DIFFICULTY
Like playing Stephen Hendry blindfolded. So difficult then.

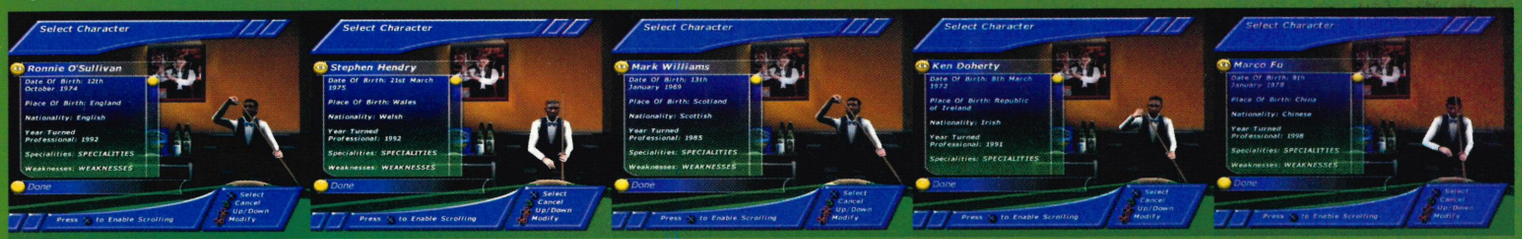
COUGHING
The only PS2 game with coughing in it. So top marks.

//Developer Blade has managed to give the balls and tables an almost photo-realistic quality//



WORLD RANKING

Play as or with the world's finest in *World Championship Snooker 2001*.



Ronnie O'Sullivan
At 17 he was the youngest ever winner of a ranking tournament and has gone on to become the World Champion this year. Known for his swashbuckling style and thrilling shot making. A true star of the sport

Wins: UK Championship 1993, 1997; British Open 1994; Asian Classic 1996; German Open 1996; Regal Scottish 1998, 2000; China Open 1999; World Championship 2001.

Stephen Hendry
No-one has ever dominated the game the way Hendry did during the nineties, winning seven World Championships (a record) in that decade. Has lost some of his sparkle in recent years but is still one of the top players in the world.

Wins: Too many to mention. Needless to say, a lot.

Mark Williams
A steady left-hander, Mark Williams is the current world number one and indeed became the first southpaw to win the World Championship when he beat Matthew Stevens in 2000.

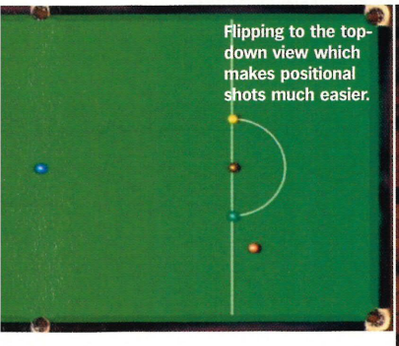
Wins: Regal Welsh 1996, 1999; Grand Prix 1996; British Open 1997; Irish Open 1998; Thailand Masters 1999, 2000; Liverpool Victoria UK Championship 1999; Embassy World Championship 2000.

Ken Doherty
The first player from the Republic of Ireland to win the World Championship. When he took the trophy home in 1997 he was welcomed by more than quarter of a million fans. Doherty was duly named Irish Sports Personality of the Year for his achievement.

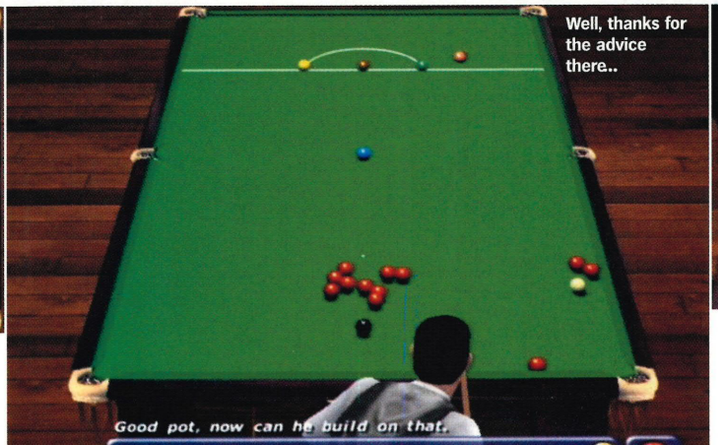
Wins: Regal Welsh 1993; Embassy World Championship 1997; Rothmans Grand Prix 2000.

Marco Fu
The latest star to rise from the east, Marco Fu is currently the best player in Asia. His rise has been meteoric moving from 377th in the world to 15th in just two seasons. He was voted Young Player of the Year in 1999.

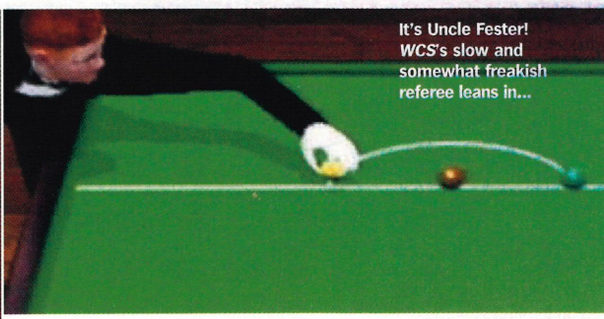
Wins: None as yet (Runner-up in the Grand Prix 1998)



Flipping to the top-down view which makes positional shots much easier.



Well, thanks for the advice there..



It's Uncle Fester! *WCS*'s slow and somewhat freakish referee leans in...

CART FURY: CHAMPIONSHIP RACING

WORDS: NICK JONES

CART FURY: CHAMPIONSHIP RACING

No, not an angry racing game, just one that isn't ashamed of its arcade heritage.

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway
Players: 1-2
Release: July

For those of you not familiar with US motor racing, CART stands for Championship Auto Racing Teams. So now you know. It is, in effect, the American version of F1 racing which places more emphasis on speed and drama and less on the technological and tactical side of the sport. As such, it makes ideal fodder for the videogame treatment.

Thanks to its coin-op heritage (the sit-down arcade cabinet has been doing the rounds for about six months now) *CART Fury: Championship Racing* is an out-and-out arcade-style racer – it's not yet another attempt to bring simulation racing into your living room but rather a pick-up-and-play racing game full of the thrills and spills of high-speed, high-risk racing.

It'll be no surprise then that subtle braking and multiple gear changes make way for more simplistic controls. In fact the first few courses don't actually require you to take your foot off the accelerator, let alone touch the brakes. More importantly the skill needed here is to avoid the other 27 cars on the course (travelling at stupidly high speeds) and make your way from your starting position at the back of the crowd into first place by whatever means possible.

It won't just be a matter of avoiding the other vehicles – when cars collide, debris is sent flying 20 feet into the air littering the track with fragments of metal, wing mirrors and wheels. Hit one of these and you too will be sent spinning off course into the barrier, losing your position. With its roots in the arcade, there are a couple of features which would never make their way into the real sport – turbo boosts and short cuts. Boosts must be used strategically to get the most out of them while short cuts, well, get you round quicker.

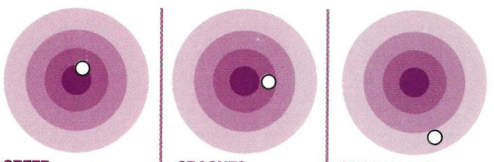
The game is already looking arcade perfect on the PS2 with 15 of the official drivers and CART tracks (18 in total). Plus there's a load of bonus additions to the PS2 version – a driving school, racing videos to be earned and an assortment of mini-games.

CART Fury should make a refreshing change to slightly drier and less entertaining F1 simulations. It's simple: you put your foot down and race at breakneck speeds around progressively more difficult tracks – and you don't even need an F1 licence to play. However, if you do want to get closer to the 'real thing' then Midway has thoughtfully included Simulation and Season modes – entirely exclusive to the PS2 version. There's also two-player mini-games where you can take on a human opponent in games like Demolition (destroy your opponent's car) and Lock On where you get to destroy other racers with missiles.

CART Fury will not challenge some of the more 'serious' PS2 racing games but along with titles like *Rumble Racing* and *ATV Offroad Fury* it should fill a broadening niche for the no-brains racing genre. □

ON TARGET? CART FURY: CHAMPIONSHIP RACING

Loads of fun in the arcade, *CART Fury* should be a spot on conversion with a host of PS2 extras. Can't really go wrong can it?



SPEED
Emphasis on fast and furious racing, not realistic handling.

CRASHES
What racing is all about – stomach churning pile-ups.

ORIGINALITY
Seen it all before, but after all those F1 simulations...

LEADING BY FORCE

Finishing first isn't just about being the fastest driver.

Follow the line
Stay as close as you can to the racing line.

Demolition
Smash cars into smithereens with a hefty nudge.

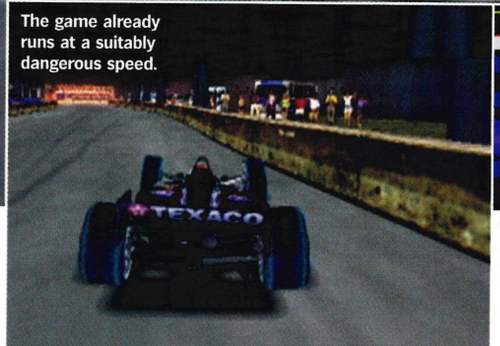
Block your opponent
Get in the way of other cars wherever possible.

Lock on
In this mini-game a rocket launcher is used to clear a path.

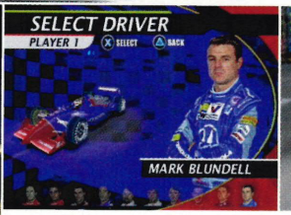
Sparks and wheels fly in a spectacular crash.

There's much to be said of a racing game where rewards are reaped by turning opponents' cars into write-offs.

Even the race track locations are more interesting than those of F1.



The game already runs at a suitably dangerous speed.



The drivers are from last last season, but do you really care?

fashion
victim

WORDS: AMOS WONG

VICTORIOUS BOXERS

ESP's foray into the boxing arena throws conventions out of the ring with their lifelike take on the gloves and gumshield genre.

Publisher: Empire Interactive
Developer: ESP
Players: 1-2
Release date: September

As an anthemic trumpet solo works its way to a dizzyingly triumphant crescendo, a lone figure is seen running through an empty street. Later, he's strapping on bandages before donning boxing gloves and striding into the ring, swathed in heroic backlit glory.

Victorious Boxers is PS2's new boxing contender is ready to duke it out with *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2's* craziness and the truer to life *Knockout Kings 2001.* And if you haven't already guessed by the protagonist's looks, the game harks from Japan and is based on a hugely popular comic – no doubt a key factor in *Victorious Boxers'* healthy Japanese sales.

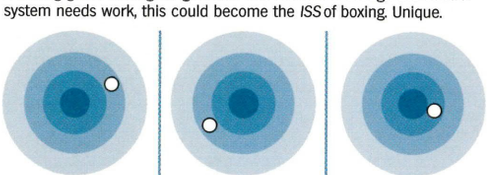
Firstly this is about as far removed from your typical sporting sim as you can get, leaving all the customising character and gym training options outside the ring, while as the comic's protagonist Ippo Makunouchi, the players' primary concern is to slug their way through over 40 opponents to the top, while being subjected to coach Kamogawa's grilling between matches. The game's most noticeable difference is the exclusion of life meters altogether. Want to know how Ippo is faring in the match? Then pay close attention to his face's expression and the coach's advice between rounds. He'll spout the encouraging 'Good rhythm!' to the more worrying 'What the hell are you doing?!' while his tone and insistency will give further information about your players' health. During the match, Ippo's punch speed will give you a pretty good indication of how he's doing in terms of stamina too.

While the characters may not look real, the motion-capture certainly does – a good connecting punch will convincingly send Ippo or opponents stumbling and sweat flying. By moving the left analogue stick slightly, Ippo will bend and twist at the waist to avoid incoming blows, whereas a harder nudge will move him around the ring. The ▢ and △ buttons issue left and right straight punches while the remainders are for hooks; combining the R1 and L1 buttons with the ○ button will execute a 'jaw breaker upper.' Other special moves will become unlocked as Ippo progresses.

Visually, the game fairs poorly against its competitors, with last-gen 2D cut-out crowd animation and plainly executed fighters. The environments are also simply realised with a minimum of textures. Nevertheless, the play mechanics are fantastic, especially once the unique control system has been mastered. Sitting somewhere between EA Sports and Midway's offerings, *Victorious Boxers* pulls no punches in presenting a more unique take on the whole interactive boxing experience. Whether this uniqueness will be enough for UK gamers to see past the game's somewhat uninspired looks remains to be seen. That said, *Victorious Boxing* already offers something new to the genre and must be duly applauded. □

ON TARGET? VICTORIOUS BOXERS

A boxing game aiming for gimmick-free realism? Although the control system needs work, this could become the *ISS* of boxing. Unique.



AGGRESSION
Want to see mouthguards flying? Look elsewhere.

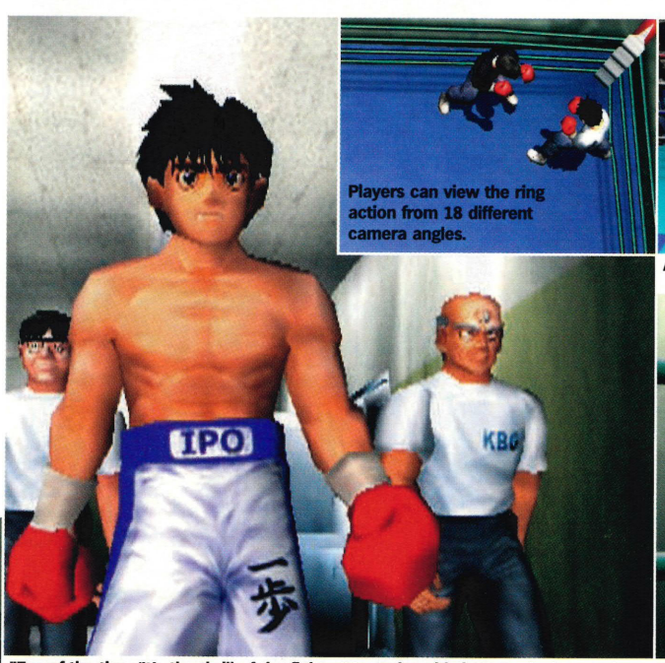
LOOKS
Graphically adequate with sparse levels looking a little empty.

PLAYABILITY
Realistic, but the controls will need fine tuning.

THE SOURCE

Outsider kid gets taken under good-hearted coach's wing...

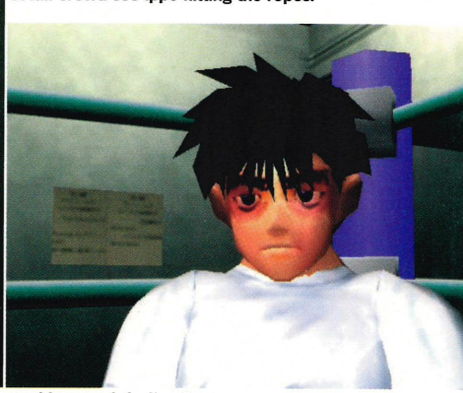
Hajime no Ippo is the only comic by artist George Morikawa. Debuting in February 1990 in the pages of *Weekly Shonen* Magazine, the series has been compiled into 56 volumes and even spawned its own popular anime series last year. A bullied high school student, Ippo meets boxer Mamoru Takamori, who saves him from a scuffle. Inspired, Ippo starts training at Kamogawa gym and is taken under the wing of its owner/coach Kamogawa, who trained Takamori. But as Ippo quickly discovers, boxing along isn't enough to make one strong.



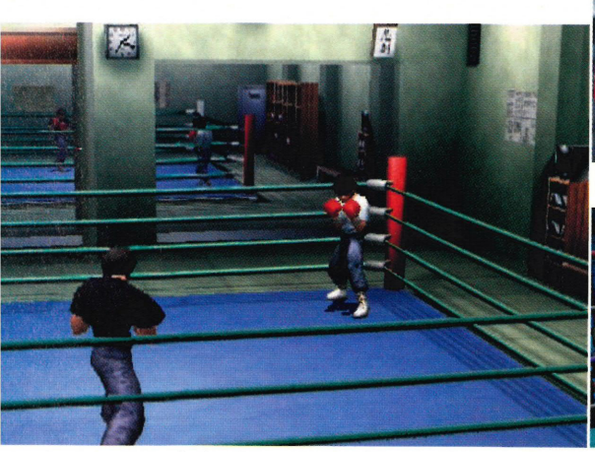
"Eye of the tiger/It's the thrill of the fight..." Ippo does his best Rocky impression.

Players can view the ring action from 18 different camera angles.

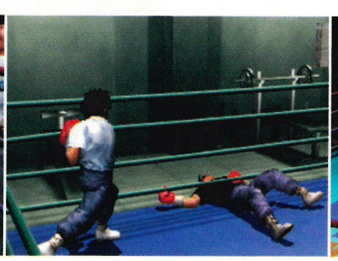
A full crowd see Ippo hitting the ropes.

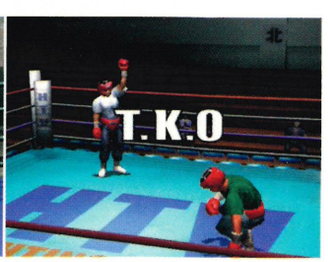


Looking good, feeling fine.



Kamogawa Gym is the place to start your pugilist career.





Between every round, Ippo gets an inspirational talking to from his fearsome trainer Kamogawa – it usually does the trick.

TIGHT-**FISTED**

WORDS: SAM RICHARDS

CITY CRISIS

Didn't your old dear tell you not to play with matches? Now look what you've done.

Publisher: Take 2
Developer: Syscom Entertainment
Players: 1
Release: July

The Web site of *City Crisis* developer Syscom Entertainment proclaims, "If it is possible to rephrase 'rescue to adventure', this city would be the concrete jungle!". Really, such an apt description of the game makes it difficult to go on, but we'll try...

As you might have guessed from the rampant Japlish above, *City Crisis* is a cute little title from the people who brought you *Action Bass* and *I Am The Air Traffic Controller*. You get to pilot a rescue helicopter across a cityscape seemingly plagued by arson incidents and various other domestic mishaps, dousing flames with your water cannon and winching the wailing victims to safety. It's sweet, it's simple, and the sense of reward you feel upon plucking innocent citizens out from the raging inferno is difficult to beat.

The action is far from realistic, but there's a pleasing boldness to the comic-book graphics on show. If it wasn't for the absolutely pathetic draw distance currently on display, *City Crisis*' cartoon world would be an enchanting place to spend a while. The population communicates in speech bubbles: "Help!" scream the burns victims, "Yah!" cry the busted criminals and "Bow Wow!" bark the dogs. It all makes beautiful sense.

You get a choice of five 'copters, distinguished from each other by speed and handling properties as well as appearance (oh yeah, and one of them's shaped liked a big pink toy pig). After getting your hands around the choppers' relatively simplistic analogue-stick handling system in Training mode, it's out into the world where there are blazes aplenty to extinguish.

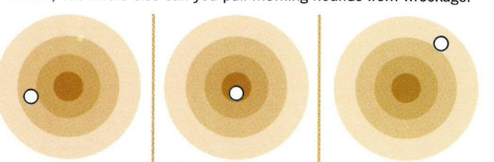
Rescue missions require you to cruise around town putting out fires in schoolhouses and rescuing charred survivors. You're racing against the clock as well as the victims' own expiry dates while elements of strategy are introduced via the finite water supply and limited berth of your vessel. Even before one blaze is quenched, another emergency flashes up on your radar – typically there are three disasters to every mission, at the end of which your performance is assessed comprehensively.

The two chase missions provide variety as you shine a searchlight on a hijacked bus or car to assist the ground troops in cornering the errant vehicle. However, there are only seven missions in total. While the sizeable range of factors comprising your points score in any one mission invite numerous replays, you can see all *City Crisis* has to offer within two hours. It doesn't help that, in this version at least, all missions and vehicles are available from the start, throwing any sense of progressive play structure out the window.

City Crisis is not about to affect sales of *GT3*, but there's nothing quite like this game on the shelves right now. At very least, it's a charming curiosity. In Syscom's world, nothing is *really* bad or dangerous. In a foreign exchange with Take 2, Syscom will publish *Smuggler's Run* in Japan. Its new name? *Crazy Bumps*. □

ON TARGET? CITY CRISIS

Such typically Japanese cutesiness is only ever going to be a minority concern, but where else can you pull mewling hounds from wreckage?



LOOKS
Cartoon cityscapes marred by awful pop-up problems.

LEVITY
The city's in crisis, but you're flying in a pig-shaped chopper.

LONGEVITY
A cute distraction. Not exactly compelling though.

CRISIS? WHAT CRISIS?

Fires may be raging across the city, but the emergency services don't seem to taking the situation very seriously.

First they give you a helicopter in the shape of a giant porcine stuffed toy. Hardly time for comical fancy dress now is it?

Then, when your toy pig helicopter crashes into a building, instead of going out with a dignified bang, you're transformed into a massive roast ham on a plate. Cheers.

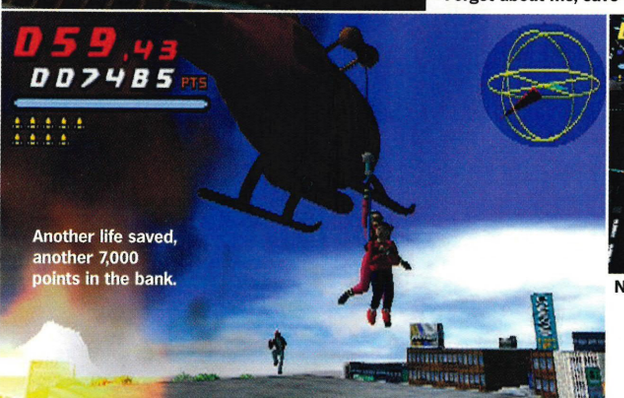
Real human people may be copping it all around you but don't worry because the game rewards you with equal points for rescuing their pet pooches. Now that's one mixed-up society.

In Final Rescue mode, make a competition out of how many people, dogs and pink fluffy cats you can pull from the fire.

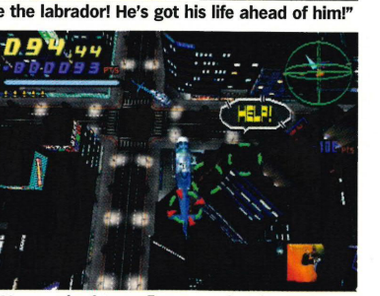
Fiddle with your chopper while Rome burns.

"Forget about me, save the labrador! He's got his life ahead of him!"

Leer at the Britney billboards.



Another life saved, another 7,000 points in the bank.



No wonder it's on fire – put that fag out!

paranoid

WORDS: KEITH STUART

UEFA CHALLENGE

It's hot and everyone looks sexy – yes, summer would be the perfect season but for one fatal flaw: no football. Infogrames thinks it has the answer.

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Infogrames Sheffield
Players: 1-4
Release: June

UEFA. It's an acronym sure to have saliva dripping down the chin of every ambitious Premier Division manager in the land. UEFA of course means European football. And this means bags and bags of lovely money. Oh and glory of course, let's not forget about glory. On top of that UEFA is also an excellent videogame license, because every gamer who walks into Electronics Boutique will have heard of it. Yes, *UEFA Challenge* is going to be hard to miss when it hits the shelves in June. But does it deserve such attention?

Judging by the early demo we've been training with, it does. The latest working version boasts a huge wealth of tournament options taking in all the top league clubs and national sides from around Europe (although the names have sometimes been changed due to license restrictions, so that, say, Celtic becomes Glasgow Parkhead). You can take part in customised league and knock-out competitions, Euro club cups, Euro trophy challenges, Euro mini-leagues, International cups and goal-scoring competitions. Also feel free to create your own custom teams and fiddle with formations and strategies to your heart's content. Everything you would expect, then, from a 21st century simulation.

Unfortunately, out on the pitch, our preview copy reveals that there's still work to be done on the actual game engine. Player animation is not yet half as slick and natural as it is in Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo's latest outstanding title (currently known as *Winning Eleven 5*). AI here is also in its working stages at the moment – you often don't gain control of the right players at the right times and when a long ball drops near a computer-controlled player on your team, he'll, more often than not, remain happily oblivious to it.

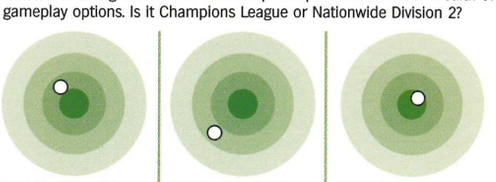
More importantly when you're on the ball, the game currently lacks responsiveness. There's too long a delay between joypad pressing and the desired action which prevents measured tactical build-up play.

What we do like are the concessions to realism. Ill-timed sliding tackles lead to some truly sickening encounters as players fly into the air and land in tangled messes on the turf (was Roy Keane a technical advisor?) Players will also pick up successions of limb-shattering injuries throughout the action, forcing you into substitutions – a vital feature for strategy fans.

UEFA Challenge has some serious last minute work to do if it's to pull into championship contention. The presentation and the options are there and there's even some decent commentary (courtesy of Barry Davies), something many recent football games have noticeably lacked. However, all the extras, options and realistic player statistics in the world don't matter a half-time orange if a game's no fun to play. Still, if the current ruffles are ironed out, *UEFA Challenge* could save us all from a summer bereft of the beautiful game. □

ON TARGET? UEFA CHALLENGE

License-boasting action with all the top European teams and a wealth of gameplay options. Is it Champions League or Nationwide Division 2?



PRESENTATION
Has all the gameplay options you could imagine. And more.

BALL CONTROL
Players currently lack responsiveness. Somewhat worrying.

LICENSE
The UEFA name will guarantee sales. Let's hope they're deserved.

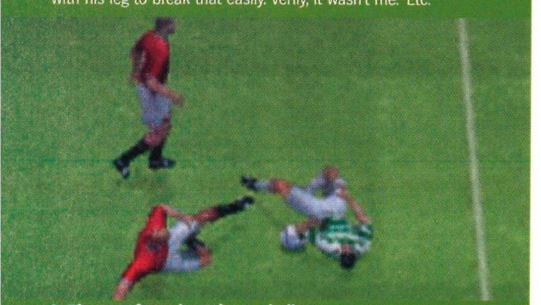
SIGN LANGUAGE

No modern football sim is complete without its share of dramatic mid-game animated sequences...

UEFA Challenge doesn't let us down – even if it is missing the two gestures that today's players love most: the hands-together-in-prayer gesture (for begging with the ref when you've just maimed another player) and the finger wag (for when the ref has made the decision to send you off after you've maimed another player).

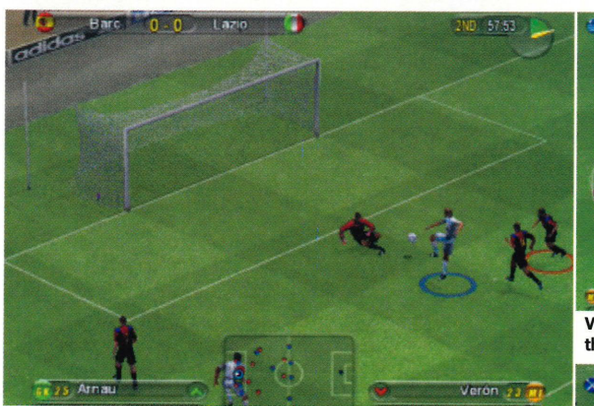
1. The wild goal celebration. Variations include 'Jump on my back' 'Praise be to Allah' and 'I'm an aeroplane!'

2. The sending off. 'But Mr Ref, something must be wrong with his leg to break that easily. Verily, it wasn't me.' Etc.



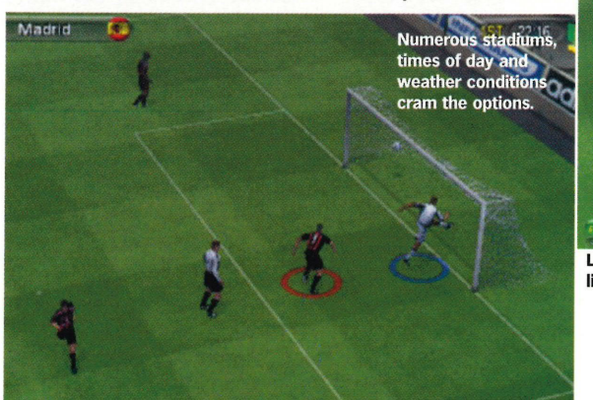
3. The two-footed, studs-up challenge. 'Hello, I'm Roy Keane' And indeed he is.

Set pieces are controlled via huge arrows. Unfortunately these obscure most of the players you're aiming for.

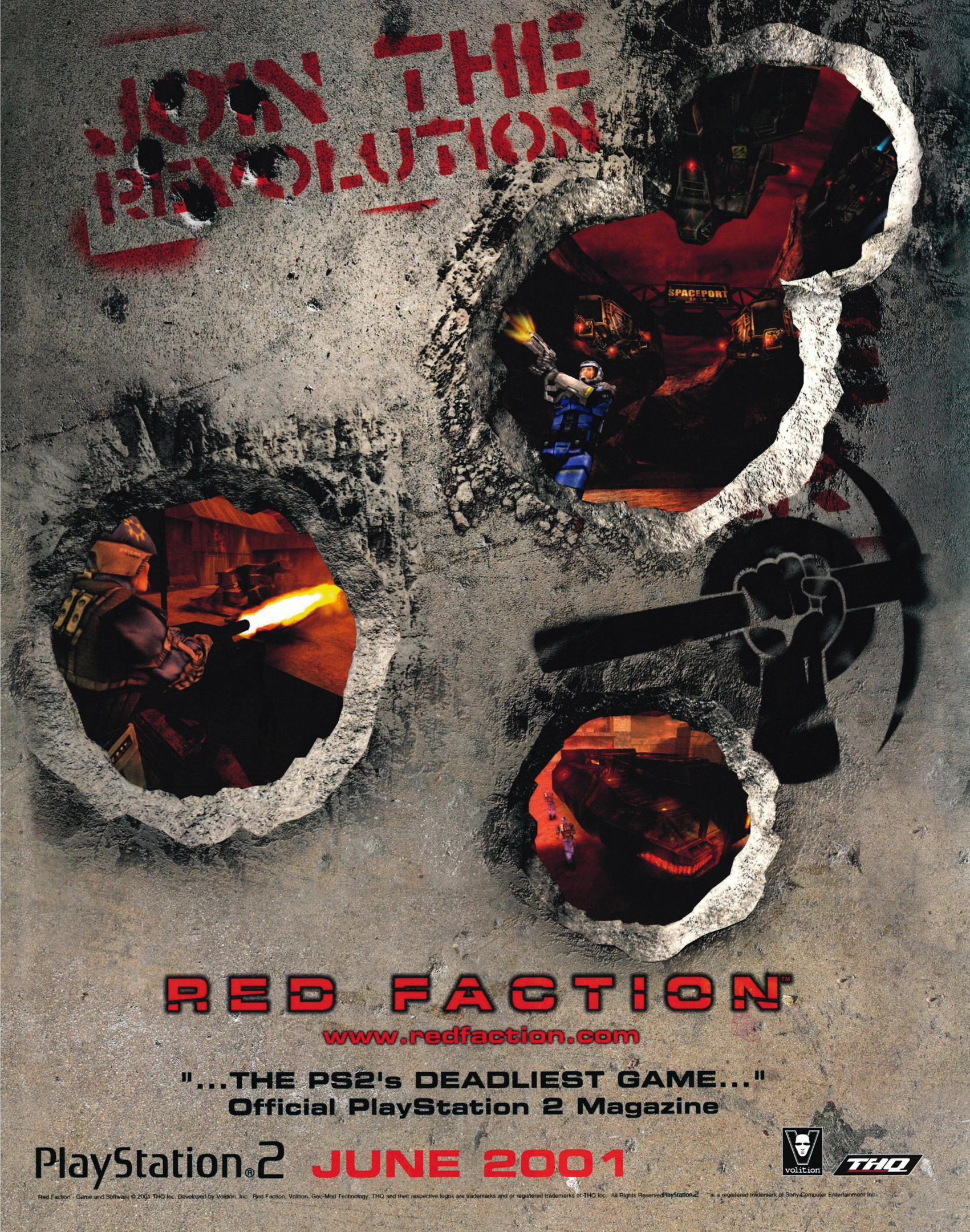


Shots seem to be rare as most of the action takes place midfield.

Vicious sliding tackles are a guilty pleasure thanks to the extravagant foul animations.



Lack of responsiveness makes Man Utd play like Carlisle Utd. See what we did there?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WORDS: AMOS WONG/PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES COPE

"In Japan, warriors of the Sengoku era are not regarded as 'cool,' so I had to be courageous when I created *Onimusha*..."

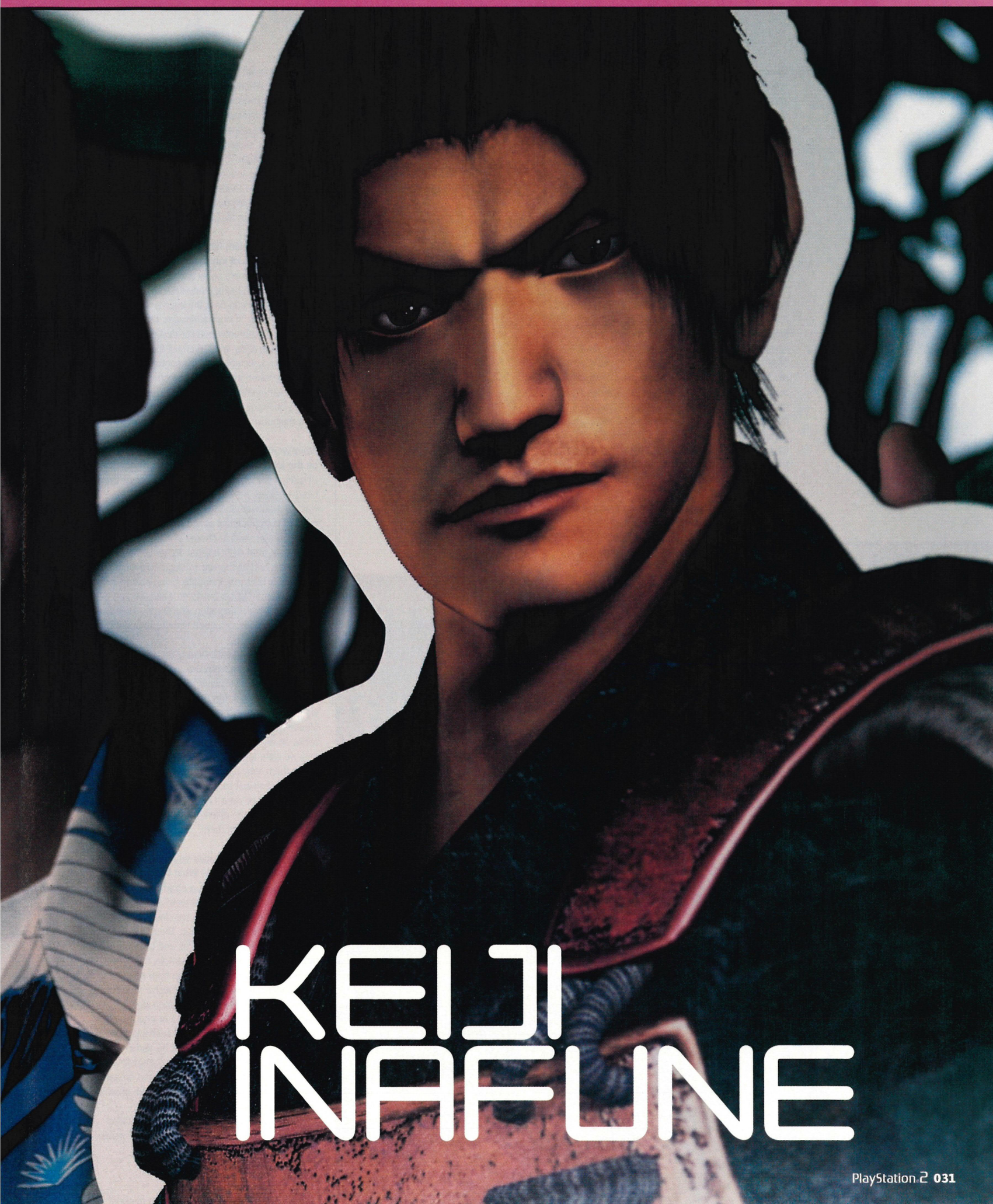
Even in Japan, you'd be hard-pushed to find any historical drama loving teens. With an arm-long list of icons more than likely culled from the current crop of pop and movie stars, why would any of them want to worship an old fossil from the past? With the million selling success of *Onimusha* in Japan, Keiji Inafune's gamble has paid off. Casting heartthrob Takeshi Kaneshiro as the lead was inspired. Inafune, the original designer of *Megaman*, now producer and manager of Capcom's Team 2 Research and Development division knows a thing or two about creating hit characters...

SHINJUKU: THE HEART OF MODERN

Tokyo. Over two million people a day rush through its sprawling train station, which effectively divides the ordered business district and the chaotic, neon-lit shopping and entertainment areas. Situated in the skyscraper-ridden west side of the tracks is Capcom's Tokyo office, where a lone *Megaman* figure greets visitors upon entering the reception. Quite fitting really, considering the man *OPS2* is meeting today. Keiji Inafune designed the mascot when he started at Capcom 14 years ago. Like many of his peers who eventually found work in fields as diverse as robotics, it was the booming manga (comics) and anime (animation) industries' output during his youth which informed his decision to work a creative industry.

Inafune-san freely admits that the blue hero was partially inspired by Tetsuwan Atom (aka Astro Boy) and has fond memories of classic shows like *Gatchaman* (*Battle Of The Planets*) and giant robots Mazinger Z and Getter Robo. Usually based in Osaka, home of the Capcom's R&D departments, the friendly, easy going chap shared his thoughts with us on one of his weekly commutes to Tokyo and struck some poses next to an almost life sized display of Samanosuke.

And here's one I prepared earlier. Inafune-san alongside a cut-out of Samanosuke, *Onimusha*'s swarthy hero.



KEIJI INAFUNE

Have you always been a videogame fan?
When I was a kid, videogames didn't exist and it was around the time I was in Junior High that *Space Invaders*, the first 'videogame,' came out. I've always liked to draw and originally wanted to become a comic-book artist, so I joined this industry because of my interest in drawing, as opposed to games. As you know, Japan excels in manga and anime and I was a big fan of both. When I was in elementary school, I often watched anime on TV – works by creators such as Osamu Tezuka and Go Nagai. They were very inspirational.

Did you consider many other careers in different fields beforehand?
I wanted to be involved in a profession where I could make a living by drawing and although being a manga artist was one way to go about it, the idea just wasn't realistic. Around the time when I was looking for a job, the games industry had the biggest demand for artists, I thought it would allow me to create characters and draw. So I thought I'd be able to fully apply my skills in videogames. I drew a lot of illustrations of original characters – four thick sketchbooks worth I thought had commercial appeal – and brought them to Capcom and other companies. I was hired around the time of *Super Mario Brothers* and the first *Dragon Quest* games.

How do you think your experiences compare then to someone new to the industry?
Games back then could be likened to black and white silent movies of the past, we had to really consider how we could make them as enjoyable as possible. Whereas today, games are like Hollywood movies that are full of CG effects: there's a big difference in the skills required for applicants. I personally feel I was in a more advantageous situation back then, being able to start from scratch. You really had to try hard to build games up to look larger than life. Now you're trying to make a mark in a graphically sophisticated environment, where everything seems larger than life already.

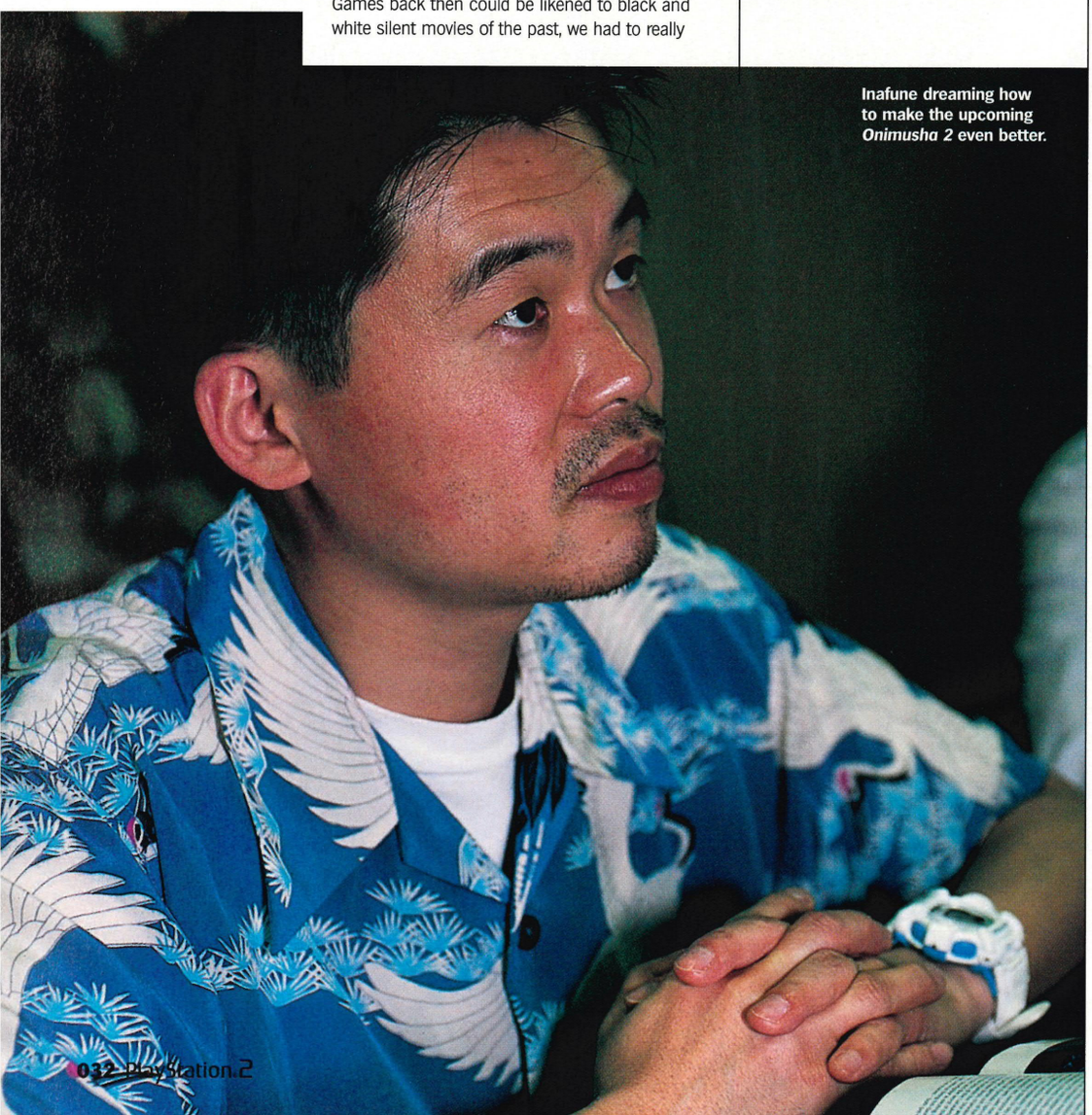
//"I was in Junior High when *Space Invaders* came out. As a kid, coin-op videogames didn't even exist"//

You're involved with hiring new staff, so what's your impression of job seekers today?
Thousands of people apply and only a few are hired, the reason being many don't really think about how they can pass the interview. Only a few applicants bring in original designs. Most of them just imitate a currently popular designer to display their drawing skills. While many of them are indeed technically proficient, skill isn't enough – creativity and imagination are essential. When we ask them about their interests, many of them just mention games and they don't understand that its more advantageous to show an interest in other areas.

What were some of your early experiences like on the job? What games did you work on?
Officially, I started with *Megaman* but before I was hired, I helped out with the original *Street Fighter*. I was involved with drawing the winning and losing faces of the characters at the end of the rounds. On *Megaman* I was in charge of creating all the characters, from their original design to drawing the sprites and all the way to illustration work for magazines. I felt very fortunate, being able to do exactly what I had set out to do. I also worked on Capcom's first collaboration with Disney. They were very strict, but it was a good learning experience.

How was working with Disney restrictive and what did you learn from the experience?
I should say it was 'difficult,' not 'strict' as such. There were many things I couldn't understand and we had plenty of discussions. For example, Mickey Mouse walks on two feet, right? But when we made an enemy character – a tiger – walk on two feet, we were told not to make them bi-pedal. So I asked them 'Why can only Mickey walk on two feet?' and they just said that the main characters were OK as they were. I didn't get what they meant at the time, but the difference was in the extent that they personified them.

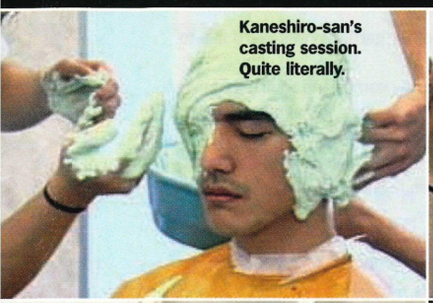
What were your influences when developing the bosses in *Megaman?* What are the various stages behind developing a character?
The influences for *Megaman* were mainly anime and manga, especially the more classic anime-style of ten to twenty years ago. There is a certain aesthetic to the mecha designs and therefore, we must follow those rules. For example, the bosses never end up looking like mecha from something like Gundam, likewise Gundam mecha shouldn't look as if it could fit in the *Megaman* world. For starters we decide what the boss or character's overall style is and determine what shape this character will be based on. Will it be human or animal? If animal, then what kind of animal? We next begin developing illustrations based on our notes and sketches, and then convert the original artwork into pixel form. The final stage in development is when we set about the detailed process of animating the character's movements.



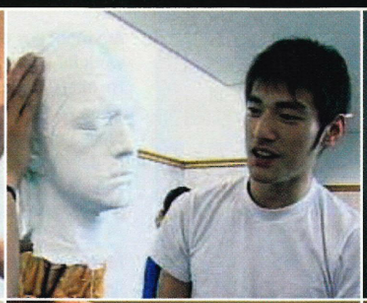
Inafune dreaming how to make the upcoming *Onimusha 2* even better.

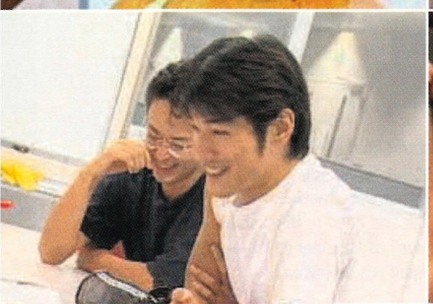
STAR PEOPLE

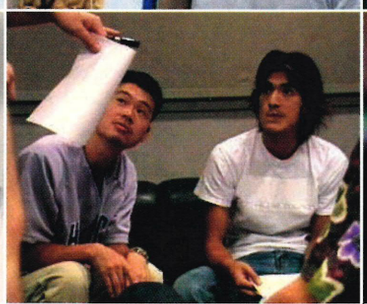
One of the many non-game-biz related people Inafune enjoyed working with, Takeshi Kaneshiro starred in acclaimed films *Chungking Express* (1994) and its follow-up *Fallen Angels* (1995), both by renowned arthouse director Wong Kar-Wai. Despite having a wide variety of TV, film and CD releases to his credit, the two features perhaps represents Kaneshiro's most well known work internationally. Before *Onimusha* hits the shops, that is. In creating his digital alter ego Samanosuke, Kaneshiro had a mask made from his face, which was in turn scanned into the computer. He also acted out and recorded the dialogue scenes with a stack of reflective beads stuck to his face to accurately capture his expressions which were then applied to the 3D model. Kaneshiro also worked with Inafune and the game staff, contributing ideas to and checking aspects of the work in progress.

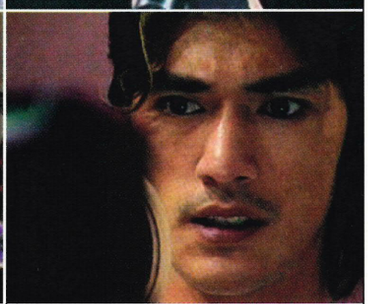


Kaneshiro-san's casting session. Quite literally.









Do you still design the odd character for the *Megaman* series?
No, but I am involved in directing.

Is must be enormously challenging to have to keep coming up with new ideas for gameplay in order to better the previous versions?
The process of developing a game requires a lot of time and people and I have to consider the development cost for every title. I actually have many ideas regarding extra elements to include into the games, but I must consider the budget above all. Because in the end, you have to make a profit. So the amount of new material we can put in is always limited, but we make the best effort to add as much as we can. Of course since we're developing the sequel we have gained experience from the previous game, so we get better at what we do and hopefully it shows in the game.

How did you progress from being a character designer to a producer?
In my case even when I was working as a character designer, I involved myself in other aspects of a game's production – this isn't common amongst character designers. I ended up working on game planning, designing the maps, talking with the people in charge of creating the music and making suggestions, so when Capcom introduced the producer system I jumped at the chance to become one.

As a producer, what's your level of involvement when you work on different games?
It varies from game to game, I'd have to say. When working on *Resident Evil*, Mikami is in charge of the overall direction, so I handled the promotion side, creating advertising material for the game. In other cases like *Onimusha*, I was closely involved with all areas of the production.

//"I wanted a contraption which would spray water on people's faces during a gruesome splatter scene"//

Didn't you work on the survival/horror CG Movie attraction Bio Hazard (Resident Evil) 4D Executer open to the public at Toshimaen Funpark?
Yes. I was involved with the scenario, checking the designs and ideas for the gimmick chairs. I came up with all of the '4D' shocks [laughs]. Originally, I even wanted to use a contraption that would spray water on people's faces during a gruesome splatter scene, but the people at the Toshimaen Funpark said 'that's enough!' [laughs]

What are some of the things you enjoy or dislike the most about producing games?
I'm learning a lot. I enjoy talking with people from other industries, like *Onimusha's* opening film director or with anime-guru Koichi Ohata (director of theme park ride Bio Hazard 4D Executer's FMV) about what's happening in the anime industry. There's so many new experiences, it's almost like a culture shock! The thing that worries producers the most is the budget. Good games are costing too much to make and it's difficult to maintain high quality alongside reasonable costs.

What inspires your creativity these days?
Movies, I guess. I often watch them. With improved hardware, what's done in movies can now be applied to games.

Do you believe, as some other Japanese producers have commented, that the games industry is currently in a recession?
I don't think so. Before, games were just regarded as toys, but now they are becoming a form of entertainment. Some companies in this industry still have that old image perception, but they won't survive. The key is changing with the times, yet retaining the important aspects from the past. I think that games have finally been accepted by the mainstream, I consider them as an attraction, along with anything from Disneyland, TV series or movies. Rivals don't just exist within the industry anymore and we must compete in a much bigger field. The industry will get worse if the company strategy is just to outsell the top selling games. Until now, there have been creators who thought this way, but they need a wider vision.

For the future, what's your attitude towards development on PSone and PS2, as well as multi-platform strategies?
It's an interesting time, with the Xbox, Game Cube and PlayStation. I'm not sure which I should focus on the most and I think many game creators feel the same way. They all have their good and bad points. If possible I'd like to give them all a go but I can't. So I have to guess which will come out on top. It's a gamble.

So, with which machine do you feel the most confident?
I can't answer that one! [laughs]. I have to consider which hardware customers will be interested in. As not all of them will own multiple platforms, the key is thinking how we can appeal to their audience. Age is just one factor; there's a difference between N64 and PSone users for instance.

Do you still play games?
Not so much. Though I do try the ones that have either been getting a lot of buzz, seem interesting or along the lines of something I'd like to do in the future. I really like *Metal Gear Solid 2* and am definitely keeping my eye on that one.

Nike otaku alert! Inafune-san looking fly at Capcom HQ.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: **Keiji Inafune**
Nationality: **Japanese**
Date of Birth: **8/5/65**
Birthplace: **Osaka**

Gameography:
1987 to 1997 ***Rockman 1-8*** **(NES/SNES/PSone/Saturn)**
1990 ***Wanpaku Duck Yume Bouken aka Mischevious Duck Dream Adventure*** **(SNES)**
1990 ***Chippu to Deru no Dai Sakusen aka Chip And Dale's Big Strategy*** **(SNES)**
1993 to 2000 ***Rockman X 1-5*** **(SNES/Saturn/PSone)**
1993 ***Breath Of Fire*** **(SNES)**
1997 ***Rockman Dash*** **(PSone)**
1998 ***Resident Evil 2*** **(PSone)**
1999 ***The Misadventures Of Tron Bonne*** **(PSone)**
1999 ***Rockman 1-6*** **(PSone remakes)**
2000 ***Rockman Dash 2*** **(PSone)**
2001 ***Onimusha*** **(PS2)**

Hobbies: **Raising my child**
Favourite games: ***Legend Of Zelda, Blackout*** **(NES and SNES versions only),** ***Metal Gear Solid***
Favourite film directors: **James Cameron, Akira Kurosawa**
Favourite authors: **Stephen King**
Favourite bands or musicians: **Simon & Garfunkel**

Do you play any videogames with your five year-old son?
Actually, he doesn't play games at all. Raising children is like playing a game [laughs]. It's an adventure which changes daily.

The PS2 Network Adaptor is out soon and broadband's coming. What's your vision of online gameplay in the short and long-term?
I do have an interest in online gaming, but I'd like to think about it only after the infrastructure has been established. Going 'online' the way people do in the US or Korea isn't as popular in Japan because of i-mode [NTT DoCoMo's massively popular mobile phones]. You don't need a computer in Japan for accessing information and unless something is done to promote computers, the mobile will steal potential computer customers. Phone line charges and call costs are expensive too, so in Japan, consoles are what people go for if they want to play games.

When we met last year, you were concerned about the game recouping *Onimusha's* development cost. How did you and the team feel a few days before the game's Japanese launch? Suitably nervous?
It was costing more and more as time went on and there was a very big expectation for the game, so of course we were very nervous. But now that we've achieved domestic sales of one million, I feel very fulfiled and motivated to work on the sequel.

What was the reaction from everybody at Capcom when you first proposed the game?
It wasn't met with much objection, as I had intended it to be based on the *Resident Evil* system and I explained it that way. So they said something like 'Oh really?' and that was about it. I guess they didn't imagine that *Onimusha* would become this popular! When it hit one million sales, the entire team had a casual party, in the process drinking all the congratulatory sake we'd received.

What do you feel are some of the points that made *Onimusha* a big hit?
I was lucky. Games don't sell just by looking good or being fun to play or having what it takes to generate a lot of talk. With *Onimusha*, everything just fell together the right way.

Are there any other game genres you'd like to work in?
I'm interested in spy games and I'd like to create a game with a different angle to *Metal Gear Solid 2*, though I don't know whether I'll get around to actually doing it. Spies are cool, I'd like to try a genre that can be regarded as cool internationally and domestically.

Many would say Samanosuke is cool.
Actually in Japan, warriors of the Sengoku era are not regarded as 'cool,' so I had to be courageous when I created *Onimusha*. Though I did suspect that because of the exotic setting, it could be popular overseas.

How is *Onimusha 2* coming along?
I can't talk about the details yet, the only thing I'm allowed to say is that we're making it! [laughs] I have a lot of ideas and need to think about how to realise them, as well as consider which outside companies and staff will be involved.

How will cinematic games evolve with the high spec graphics possible?
The style's firmly established now and will become increasingly popular, but if you just keep imitating movies, it won't be entertaining. We need to incorporate the cinematic style and take it from there, establishing a new style in games that's more than a movie imitation. Take *The Matrix*. They incorporated a lot of anime styles and came up with something new. I hope we can establish a new game style in the future that will go on to influence real movies. □

//"I hope we can establish a new game style in the future which will go on to influence real movies"//

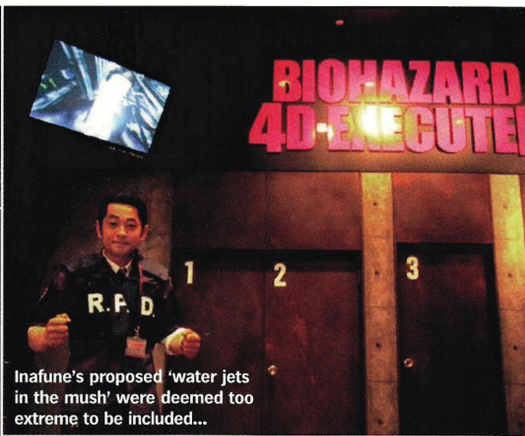
SHOCK TACTICS

Inafune helped develop the Bio Hazard 4D-Executer interactive experience as well as the gimmick-filled chairs and an array of 4D shocks and surprises.

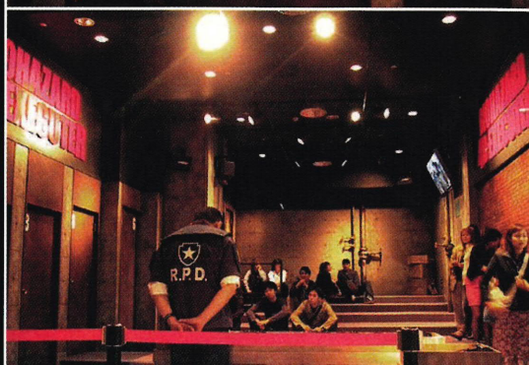
A team of UBCS soldiers head into Raccoon City for a rescue operation, only to run into a rather nasty tentacled beast which makes the Tyrant look like a puppy. As you'd expect, it dispatches the bricking-it soldiers in a variety of messy ways and all in eye-poking 3D too. Tentacles, gun muzzles and even rolling oranges stop centimetres from your face... but what's this 4D business?

The so called 'gimmick chairs' deliver an extra dimension of terror, issuing a strong jolt synched with the spine-tingling on-screen shocks. Far more unsettling is the combined presence of an air tube and air jet (prepare to squirm) but we won't spoil things, should the attraction head overseas.

The eight minute CG movie attraction at Toshimaen Funpark is helmed by anime director and mecha designer Koichi Ohata, director of *Genocyber* (released in the UK by Manga Entertainment) and creator of the giant robots and spacecraft in *Gunbuster* (Kiseki Films).



Inafune's proposed 'water jets in the mush' were deemed too extreme to be included...



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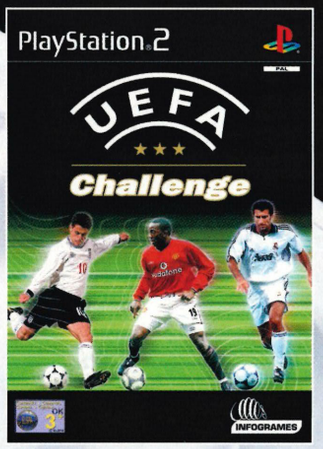
* new in-game animations and cinematics, portraying every detail from player's technical skills to advanced crowd animations.



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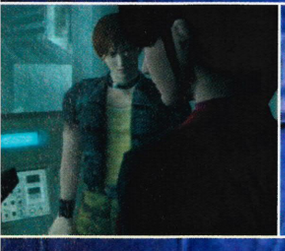
It's behind you! Chris and Claire Redfield usher in *OPS2*'s exclusive UK review of *Code: Veronica*.



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PlayStation®2
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SPY

EDITED BY JAMIE SEFTON

headliners

Slo-mo guns in *Dead To Rights* → p41
Primal unleashes the demons → p44
PS2 online warfare in *SOCOM* → p46
Exclusive! Kojima on *MGS2* → p48
Boy born with horns shocker! → p54
Activate! It's *Robot Wars* on PS2 → p57
Ghostly goings-on in *Maximo* → p58

THE FUTURE'S ONLINE!

Sony's Network Adapter sees possibilities for PS2 explode...

President and COO of SCEA Kaz Hirai reprises his pose from last year's E3 – except this time the Network Adapter is real.

FROM MAY 17-19, THE Los Angeles Convention Centre played host to 2001's Electronic Entertainment Expo – E3 for short. Most delegates agreed that the quality and variety of new PlayStation 2 games on display at the show floor's 450+ stands made this year's games industry showcase the most exciting for years. Yet one day before E3 itself kicked off, Sony Computer Entertainment of America (SCEA) held a press conference whose ramifications will ensure that the variety of PlayStation 2 product on show at any future expo will far exceed the scope of current gaming trends. Their message? Prepare for an online revolution...

The Network Adapter, a device that will allow PS2 owners to connect to the Internet via an analogue 56K modem *or* a higher-speed broadband Ethernet connector, was unveiled, given a price of $39.95, and a release date of November 2001 (for the UK expect a £39.99 pricepoint and a Feb 2002 release). Sony also confirmed that a Hard Disk Drive (HDD) able to store 40GB of data will be released simultaneously, although crucially, the two items will be sold separately and will work independently of each other. The HDD will slot into the expansion bay on the back of the PS2 while the

PHOTOGRAPHY: GAVIN ROBERTS

SPY

OPS2 Editor Mike Goldsmith checks his emails on PS2's Netscape browser at E3, while below is the PS2 version of AOL.

Network Adapter will attach to the back of the PS2 over the expansion bay, whether the HDD is inserted or not. No price for the HDD has yet been set, but rumours put it in the region of $150-200. Further rumours suggest that Sony will eventually unveil two smaller versions of the HDD of 20Gb and 10Gb capacity respectively (with cheaper price points to match) although nothing was mentioned at E3, the factual rumblings seem highly probable.

At the Conference itself, President and COO of SCEA Kaz Hirai proclaimed PS2 as "The brand for the living room," ushering in a "new era of interactive entertainment."

"We will provide an integrated PS2 online experience by next year," Hirai continued, "with online elements in place this fall. True to PlayStation's brand values we will keep the interfaces plug-and-play simple. The PS2 online experience will be seamless, not cumbersome." Hirai then announced a number of strategic partnerships which team Sony with a number of leading lights in various fields of Internet technology:

1. Sony will partner with AOL to provide email and chat services to PS2 users.

2. Sony will partner with Netscape to provide a PS2-specific Internet browser.

3. Sony will partner with Real Networks to provide streaming of audio and video to PS2 users via RealPlayer 8.

4. Sony will partner with Macromedia to provide Flash animations to PS2 users.

//"We'll provide a PS2 online experience by next year" Kaz Hirai, President of SCEA//

5. Sony will partner with Cisco Systems in order to embed the latest Internet Protocol Software within the code of its online games.

Hirai also revealed that Sony will release an official LCD monitor, keyboard and mouse for PS2 in order to aid Internet use. "We know that we can accelerate movement of the online experience," concluded Hirai, as he confirmed that the tools to make Internet gaming a reality on PS2 are being shipped to developers worldwide as of now. Indeed, the Network Adapter is already well supported – by the time of its US launch in November, five games, including the latest versions of *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* and *Twisted Metal*, will be Internet ready. Senior Vice President of SCEE Phil Harrison echoed the sentiment by proclaiming that "By 2002, all games we sanction for development [within SCEE] will have some online component."

Gamers and game developers alike have consistently called on Sony to deliver the goods as far as online PS2 plans are concerned, so these announcements should go a long way towards satisfying everybody. The dual nature of the network adapter means that Net access and online gaming will be available to everybody using standard analogue phone lines for connection, but that the superior broadband Ethernet option will also be available for anyone with CATV or DSL.

Sony also allayed fears that purchase of the expensive HDD would be necessary to venture online, although the HDD will soon enough become a crucial part of the world of episodic gaming and downloadable content that Sony clearly sees as the future of home entertainment.

Online gaming battles, massively multiplayer persistent worlds, online fan communities, episodic gaming, bonus downloadable content, the need never to go to a shop to buy games, DVDs or CDs ever again... This is the future of PlayStation 2 and it's beginning to take shape right now. ☐ **SR**

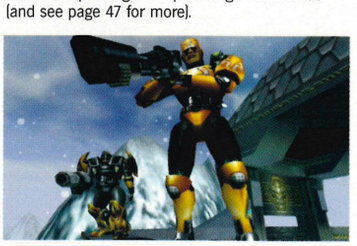
**Read more about SCEE's online plans in our exclusive interview with SCEE's Senior Vice President Phil Harrison next issue*

PLAY ONLINE

The five games that will be playable online at the launch of the network adapter in November (US) and early 2002 (UK).

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 (Neversoft/Activision)
The latest incarnation of the world famous skate game will support a minimum of four players simultaneously via the analogue modem and more via Ethernet. Look forward to Graffiti mode, Trick Attack and trash talking over the Net.

SOCOM: US Navy Seals (Zipper Interactive/SCEA)
A brand new military-themed, squad-based shooter that'll let you stalk out AI terrorists or tackle another group of human opponents in teams of up to eight. Prepare to go commando (and see page 47 for more).



Tribes 2 (Sierra/Universal)
The hugely popular online PC game is getting a PS2 makeover. An atmospheric, futuristic team shooter, *Tribes 2* is actually set for release in the autumn with bots taking the place of humans until the Network Adapter is ready.

Twisted Metal Online (Incognito/SCEA)
The PS2 iteration of this high-impact car combat game is massively anticipated in the States, although it doesn't quite inspire the same fervour here. Nevertheless, you'll be able to play it over the Net with this add-on disc.

Frequency (SCEA)
A cute new rhythm action game that requires you to reconstruct dance tracks from the likes of Orbital and The Crystal Method by pressing buttons in time. Can be played collaboratively or competitively, hence the online option.

Meet Sora – spiky-haired keymaster and Goofy chum.

And Sora realised someone had slipped something into his coffee...

TAKING THE MICKEY

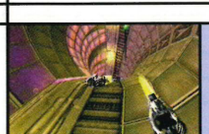
Disney and Square join forces to create the magical *Kingdom Hearts*.

YOU WOULD BE FORGIVEN if you believed Square's hook-up with the corporate giant Disney was an unholy alliance forged by the behorned one himself. In fact the deal appears to be a winner for both parties as this colourful RPG is shaping up to be one of the PlayStation 2's biggest surprise smashes, unveiled at last month's E3.

Kingdom Hearts is unique for Disney in that it's the first time different characters from the company's successful animated films will appear alongside each other in the same adventure. Players negotiate nine unique worlds based on movies like *Tarzan*, *Pinocchio* and *Aladdin*, with legendary *Final Fantasy VII* and *VIII* designer Tetsuya Nomura creating a few brand new Disney personalities. The adventure stars one of these original characters Sora, who along with Goofy and Donald, must rescue friends Riku and Kairi and find a way to defeat the Heartless, a heart and soul destroying race of evil creatures from another dimension.

Once you get over the incongruous appearance of garish Disney stalwarts appearing alongside more traditional *FF*-style characters and settings, *Kingdom Hearts* becomes an exciting prospect. With Donald and Goofy able to morph into alternate versions of themselves by wearing different costumes, plus more mature dialogue and story than the usual Disney fare, *Kingdom Hearts* should capture a significant number of adult fans when it's released in Autumn 2002.

More Square news: *OPS2* recently played *Final Fantasy X* at E3 and experienced some extraordinary animation and spectacular visual treats that suggested *FFX* could be the greatest instalment of the RPG yet. More soon. ☐ **JS**



BLUE LINES

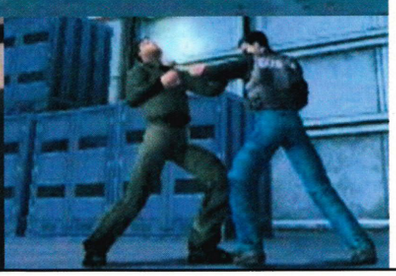
SCEA's Santa Monica Studio, the developer of *Twisted Metal: Black* is to make *Kinetica*, a *Tron*-style future bike racer ›› Interplay announces *Rubu Tribe* for PS2. Players will control the tribal chief, leading his people on a perilous journey to a mystical place ›› All 2000 units of Sony's budget PS2 dev kit PS2 Linux were allocated within eight minutes of the reservation lines opening

BULLET TIME

Namco Hometek unveils its US-developed action game *Dead To Rights*.

Ultraviolent: Jack Slate unleashes another lethal round in slo-mo.

Tense, nervous headache? Try a shotgun in the mush.



JAPANESE GAMES DEVELOPER par excellence Namco is famous for delivering the best beat-'em-ups and arcade-style racers in the business, with *Tekken Tag Tournament* and *Ridge Racer V* still PS2 bestsellers. However, the company recently set up a development house called Namco Hometek in the US and it appears that their first title could well rival the achievements of their illustrious bosses in the East.

Dead To Rights is a third-person crime thriller starring Jack Slate, a hard-nosed cop who's determined to wreak vengeance on his father's killers. For inspiration, the game plumbs Hollywood and Hong Kong action movies, but for once the phrase 'John Woo-style' can be used accurately to describe the unique fighting moves players can perform. For example, Jack can be thrown into an extravagant forward slo-mo dive with gamers still able to shoot their weapon at normal speed.

Dead to Rights has its fair share of action, but the team spent six months with a top Hollywood scribe creating a decent plot, so expect a smattering of puzzle-solving and mini-games woven into the gameplay. Animation is realistic and graphics zip along at 60 fps with cut-scenes adding a refreshing sense of humour that acknowledges the 'dumb action movie' genre to which Namco's latest PS2 title pays such obvious homage. *Dead to Rights* will be shooting up the place next year. More soon. ☐ **JS**

LIST

Five watery PS2 titles – will they get you moist or leave you high and dry?

›› Splashdown

Ride on the crest of a wave in this spectacular Sea-Doo (big jet ski) sim produced by the makers of *ATV Offroad Fury*. Immensely playable and with incredible motion captured animation the game also features stunning water effects. They should be – they had their very own programmer, who dealt only with wave physics.
Sink or Swim? Swim

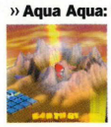
›› H3O Surfing

The Beach Boys often sang about their beloved pastime of surfing, even though the group's legendary songwriter and producer Brian Wilson was afraid of water. *H3O* unfortunately won't help anyone overcome their morbid fear of the sea, possessing awkward controls, wimpy graphics and an erratic game camera. Erk!
Sink or Swim? Sink

›› Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer

Join the IQ challenged California beach hunks and silicone-stuffed *Baywatch* babes in another surfing game that should hopefully drown the last remnants of *H30*. Activision's latest extreme sports title will deliver realistic water physics, diverse environments and an intuitive control system similar to that found in the *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* series. Of course.
Sink or Swim? Swim

›› Aqua Aqua: Wetrix 2.0



An insanely addictive and kitsch water puzzler with a healthy dollop of cuteness thrown in at the deep end. Create a brave new waterworld by keeping a balance of land and liquid that keeps falling from the sky, or your cartoony Aqua character will be destined to perish in Davey Jones' locker.
Sink or Swim? Swim

›› Pirates of Skull Cove

Ha haaar, Jim laaad etc. Sail the Seven Seas in search of pirate booty and a tropical island with a big X subtly concealing buried treasure. *Command & Conquer* creator Westwood Studios must deliver epic sea battles superior swashbuckling and a bottle or two of rum or it'll be time to walk the plank.
Sink or Swim? Swim

Five games on ice

SSX Tricky
The already quintessential PS2 snowboard game gets a makeover.
NHL 2002
Updated ice hockey sim with the added bonus of vicious, unsporting brawling.
ESPN Winter X-Games Snowboarding
Slips on the ice with its dull graphics and dodgy controls.
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder
Palmer gets digitized and *SSX*'s frosty dominance is threatened.
ESPN National Hockey Night
More fighting on ice, if only the sport was as much fun.

SPY

A SEGA STORM IS BREWING

Sega's 'all sports, all platforms' masterplan kicks-in at E3 plus new *Virtua Fighter 4*.

WITH ITS LONG-TERM strategy to become the world's leading videogame publisher gradually gathering steam, Sega's E3 show announced new titles for every available hardware platform. Including, of course, PlayStation 2. Aside from Tetsuya Mizoguchi's cryptic disclosures on his upcoming *K-Project* – he saved the full scoop on the game for *OPS2*, check out page 74 for our exclusive feature – Sega concentrated on building the hype for its imminent PS2 stars, *Virtua Fighter 4*, *NBA2K2* and *NFL2K2*.

Yu Suzuki (creator of the *Virtua Fighter* series) was at the show, telling us how his enthusiasm for PS2 was inspired by seeing the glorious *Gran Turismo 3* running on the machine. *VF4* is the first product of this enthusiasm and although it wasn't in playable form, new rolling footage of the game wowed the crowds. Admittedly, it's still one bloke on the left and another on the right fighting each other but, trust us, this is going to take the beat-'em-up to a new level.

Sega also unveiled its new 'all sports, all platforms' strategy and the superb basketball and US football titles, *NBA2K2* and *NFL2K2* will be the first exponents of the policy when they're released on PS2 in the Autumn. While this pair will arrive too early to take advantage of PlayStation 2's network capabilities, the third instalments are certainties for PS2 online action. Eight players facing-off on the Net and on the basketball court is less than a year away and EA Sports should be looking anxiously over its shoulder.

As for future Sega releases, considering Yu Suzuki's eagerness to explore PS2 development (and the fact that Dreamcast will have expired long before the game reaches its conclusion) we wouldn't be at all surprised to see his masterful RPG, *Shenmue* make an appearance. Plus, our issue #07 news story stating that the hugely promising adventure *Headhunter* is PS2 bound, was as good as confirmed by Sega America's Charles Bellfield when he commented, "The development work on *Headhunter* is continuing and the team is doing an amazing job. So we look forward to releasing that title as part of our multiplatform strategy."

Perhaps most exciting of all is the whisper in our shell-like that two of Sega's more 'aggressive' MegaDrive franchises may well be updated for PS2. All guesses to the usual address, but we've promised not to say anything further. Well, not yet anyway... ☐ **LH**

Shaolin monk, Lee Fei is one of two new fighters revealed so far.

Heading for PS2 are Sega's ace sports titles – online next year!

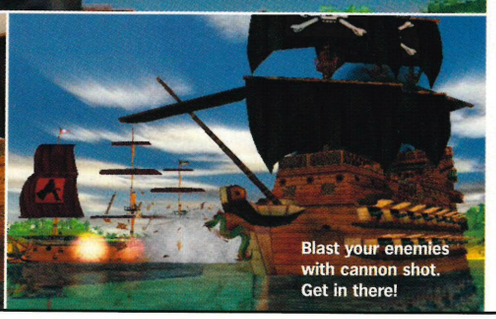
BLUE LINES

Ubi Soft has confirmed that Dreamcast smash RPG *Grandia II* is coming to PS2 » THQ have gone fishin' with upcoming PS2 piscatorial pursuit title *Bass Strike* » Tecmo's cult breed and battle game *Monster Rancher* is due for a PS2 makeover. Among a range of features will be the ability for players to import their own digital photos into *MR3* via PS2's USB ports » Whispers are starting about the new PS2 game from *Spyro* creators, Insomniac. Could it possibly be a platformer involving a certain *JT Racoon*? We can't say...

SHIVER ME TIMBERS!

Beware scurvy landlubbers, Westwood's *Pirates Of Skull Cove* is heading for PS2.

Ms Katarina, scourge of the Seven Seas.



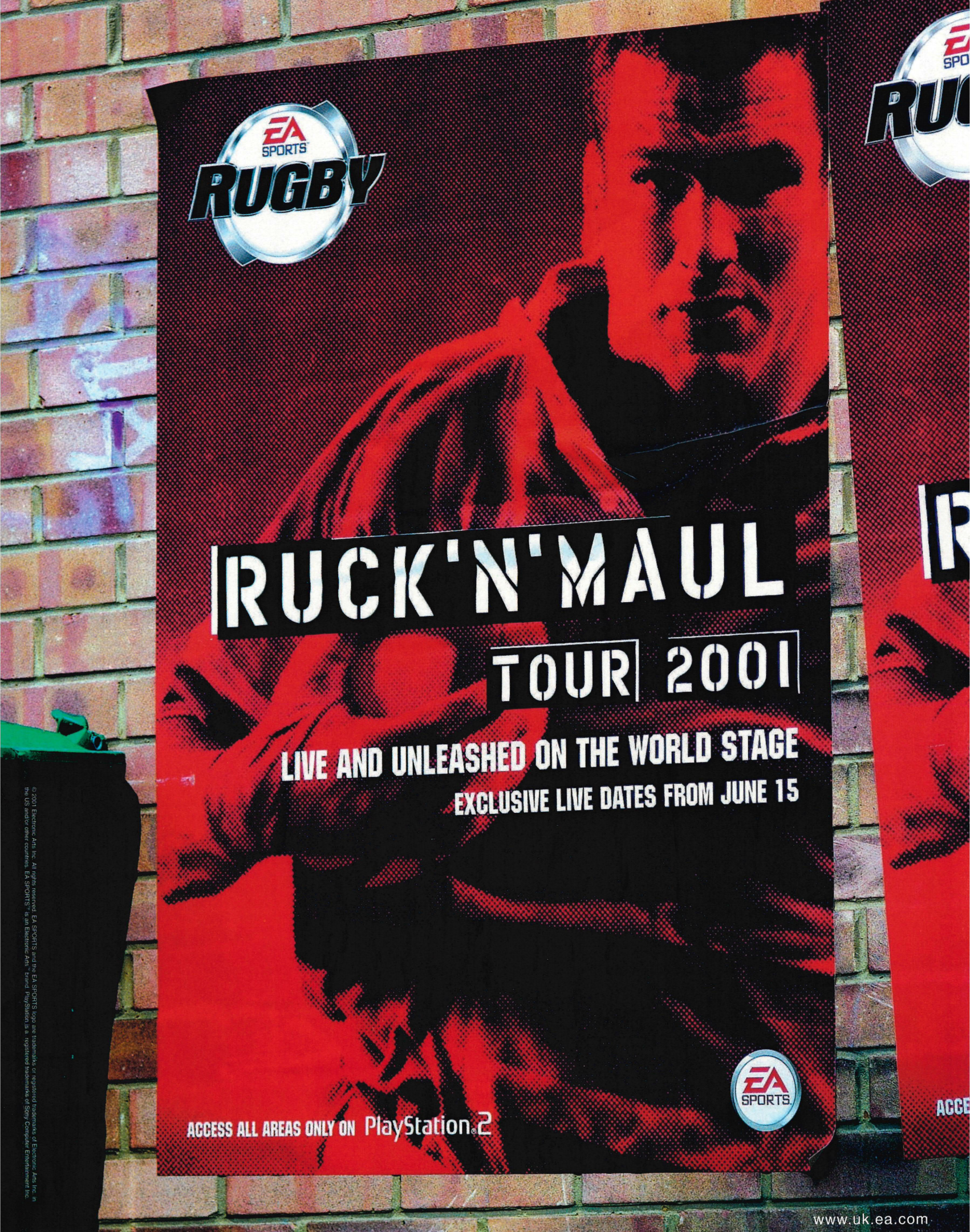
Blast your enemies with cannon shot. Get in there!

WITH *ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND* (reviewed on page 106) already hoisting the mainbrace on PlayStation 2, gamers are about to slap on that dodgy eye-patch once more to enjoy another bout of swashbuckling action. *Pirates Of Skull Cove* is a brand new epic adventure from Westwood Studios, developer of the monumental genre-defining RTS series *Command & Conquer* on the PC/PSone.

The game stars pirate captain Katarina de Leon, who sails the Seven Seas exploring exotic locations for treasure, trading in busy ports, engaging in swordfights and blasting enemy ships with lethal cannon fire. Players can immerse themselves in a complete pirate world, buying one of 12 customisable galleons, issuing orders to crewmen and upgrading your firepower with chain shot, stinkpots and magical voodoo items guaranteed to terrify enemies.

As well as the exciting sea battles, *Pirates Of Skull Cove* also throws Katarina into some seriously meaty swordfights on land against a heinous crop of evil adversaries including spiteful skeletons, mythical monsters and powerful ice demons. As you progress through the adventure, Katarina learns more complex and destructive sword manoeuvres that help her make ratatouille out of her foes, along with special weapons such as grenades and throwing knives. If that isn't enough to get your peg leg itching with excitement, prospective pirate captains can also challenge each other to multiplayer battles at sea – the aim being to send someone flailing helplessly into mermaid-infested waters.

Westwood Studios' first haul of PlayStation 2 treasure should have gamers hooked. *Pirates Of Skull Cove* sets sail this winter through EA, so don't miss exclusive details in *OPS2* very soon. ☐ **JS**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Primal's Jennifer Tate – part luscious lady, part ass-hoofing demon.

DEVIL IN HER

SCEE's Studio Cambridge reveals the dark, fantasy world of *Primal*.

THERE'S A TANGIBLE BUZZ of excitement about SCEE's Studio Cambridge and it's first PlayStation 2 title, *Primal*. The BAFTA award-winning creators of *C-12* and *MediEvil* have finally unleashed a contemporary fantasy title that delivers beautiful, extravagant locations, combined with characters and demon-kicking action sequences that Studio Cambridge intend to be a combination of the contemporary feel and energy of the *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* TV series with the epic fantasy worlds of Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* comics.

Primal is a third-person action/adventure starring Jennifer Tate, a sexy-yet-deadly heroine drawn into the supernatural underworld after realising that she is in fact, half demon. During the quest, Tate unleashes her ability to change into demonic forms, enabling her to investigate the four different realms in *Primal* that represent the elements of earth, air, fire and water (see Holidays From Hell). Tate is joined and constantly helped by a loyal gargoyle sidekick called Scree and between the two of them, players have to restore the balance of good and evil in *Primal* or chaos will dominate the world between mortality and the afterlife forever.

OPS2 was the only UK magazine to see *Primal* in an exclusive pre-E3 press conference and, although still at a very early stage, can confirm the game is already looking absolutely gorgeous – a true benchmark for future PS2 releases. Character movements have been motion captured for authenticity and are currently being tweaked for gameplay, but Tate's disturbing transformation into her hideous demonic side already creates a chilling atmosphere. As with SCEE's other epic adventure *Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy* dynamic loading techniques ensure that gamers won't have to suffer long delays between levels, and the epic environments combined with rich background textures and complex lighting effects are breathtaking.

One of the most impressive levels previewed to *OPS2* was the aquatic realm of Aquis, which had ornate Art Deco buildings beneath the shimmering water, evoking the Victoriana of Jules Verne and the ancient mythology of Atlantis. In her Undine demon incarnation, Tate can swim between the expansive man-made structures and coral archways delivering a true sense of freedom within a game that continually runs at an effortless 60fps. Studio Cambridge want each of the four demon kingdoms to have a distinctive style completely separate from each other, reflecting the way that the four devilish races have evolved through time.

Primal looks to be yet another example of a growing number of forthcoming PS2 titles that truly demonstrate what the next-gen machine is capable of generating. A contemporary yet epic story line, a refreshing goblin-free fantasy setting and ultra-detailed graphics all suggest that Studio Cambridge could have an immortal smash hit on their hands when the adventure manifests itself on PlayStation 2 during the summer of 2002. □ **JS**

HOLIDAYS FROM HELL

***Primal*'s four demonic realms.**

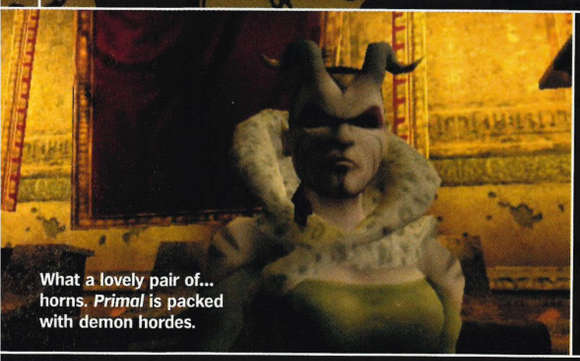
In their quest, Tate and Scree must travel to a series of devilish worlds inhabited by creatures aligned to four different elemental forces.

Solum Realm
A world infested with a brutal, animalistic race of demons called the Ferai whose whole culture is based on the thrill of hunting prey.

Aquis Realm
Underwater kingdom populated by the peace-loving Undines and ruled by King Adaro and Queen Aino.

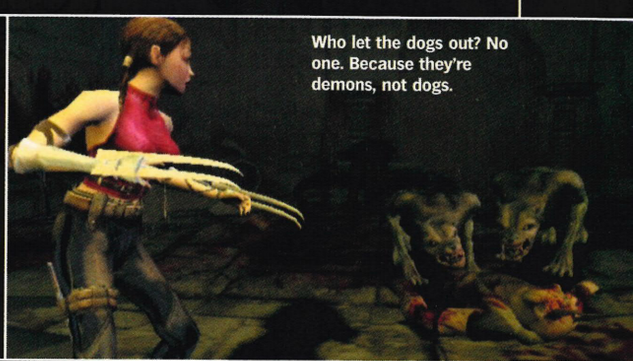
Aetha Realm
Sadistic and decadent royal couple Count Raum and Countess Empusa rule ruthlessly over a feudal society of demons known as The Wraith.

Volca Realm
Trapped inside an active volcano temple, the powerful Djinn demons rule over a subservient underclass known only as the Salamanders.



What a lovely pair of... horns. *Primal* is packed with demon hordes.

//Tate's disturbing transformation into her demonic alter ego creates a chilling atmosphere//

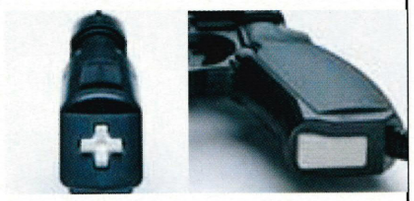


Who let the dogs out? No one. Because they're demons, not dogs.

Shoot to kill, but be careful not to hit your gun-toting buddy.

Namco's new G-Con 2 has been redesigned for PS2.

Check out the additional D-pad and reload trigger. Sweet.



GUN CONTROL

OPS2 grabs the exclusive on Namco's *Time Crisis 2* and the new G-Con 2.

GREAT NEWS FOR armchair snipers – Namco's *Time Crisis 2* is heading to PlayStation 2 and *OPS2* is the only UK magazine to have played the game using the brand new G-Con 2 controller. Originally released in the arcades three years ago, this PS2 conversion features a special two-player option and a major graphics overhaul.

As one of two top agents, your mission is to infiltrate a sinister organisation using satellites for nefarious military purposes. Motion captured cut-scenes have now been included, as well as authentic water effects and interactive scenery, all running at 60fps in single-player mode with an option for those technology buffs with 100hz televisions. *Time Crisis 2* expands on the original title with a split-screen Two-player mode that features independent routes for each player and support for the PS2's i-Link capability, so gamers can recreate the coin-op by connecting two machines and two TVs together.

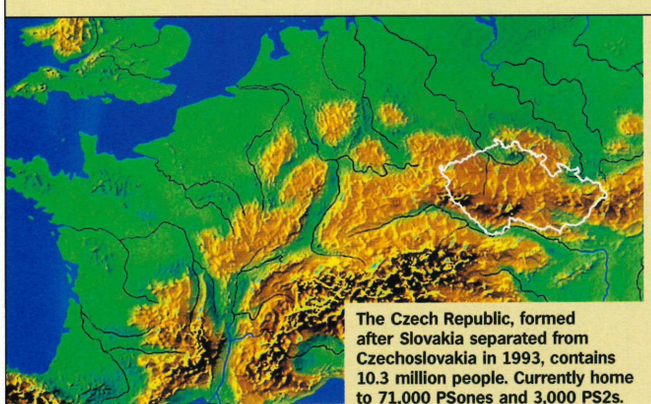
Although gamers can dig out the old PSone G-Con 45 to play *Time Crisis 2*, *OPS2* highly recommends splashing out for the redesigned and upgraded G-Con 2. With a new reload button on the base of the handle, plus a D-pad on the back to allow movement, G-Con 2 is the real deal. PlayStation 2 gamers will be able to "pack a piece" by purchasing *Time Crisis 2* and the G-Con 2 in a special pack or individually at launch in Winter 2001 through SCEE. The other Namco 3D shooter, *Vampire Nights*, produced with Sega's WOW Entertainment, has also been confirmed with G-Con 2 support. More next issue. ☐ **JS**

***Time Crisis 2* has considerably sharper and smoother graphics than the 1998 coin-op, now including realistic water and interactive backdrops.**

NEWS OF THE WORLD

THIS MONTH: CZECH REPUBLIC

VIDEOGAMING ON A GLOBAL SCALE


The Czech Republic, formed after Slovakia separated from Czechoslovakia in 1993, contains 10.3 million people. Currently home to 71,000 PSones and 3,000 PS2s.

After allocating just 300 PS2 machines prior to Christmas, Sony shipped 3,000 units into the Czech Republic in January. The PS2 has been selling through nicely since then, despite a price of GBP 350 (19,298 CZK). That's five weeks salary to the average Czech videogamer. Sony understands that it will take a price drop before the machine really starts selling in any kind of quantity – so is currently more concerned at extending the life of the PSone which is selling faster than ever now that most Czech families can afford to buy one. ☐ **NICK PENDRELL**

Top 10 Spanish PS2 games

1.	Moto GP
2.	FIFA 2001
3.	SSX
4.	NHL 2001
5.	Tekken Tag Tournament
6.	Silent Scope
7.	Ridge Racer V
8.	TimeSplitters
9.	Midnight Club
10.	ESPN Intl' Track & Field

Chart source: Bonton Megastore (07/05/01)

FIVE AMAZING FACTS ABOUT THE CZECH REPUBLIC

1. Czechs invented lager and drink more of it per head of population than any other country. In the mid-Eighties with the imported lager craze at its peak, exports accounted for 5% of the economy.

2. Half of all the cars sold in the country are Skodas, the others being British, Japanese and American. People don't think the cars are jokes even though the word Skoda means 'shame' in Czech.

3. Ice hockey is the most popular sport in the country. Most towns and schools have a local league while the Czech Republic are, not surprisingly, the current World and Olympic Champions.

4. Czechs are the least religious people in the whole of Europe, while the Rolling Stones and U2 are more popular than the Pope.

5. The Czech Republic is the second biggest producer of soft porn after the US.

gallery

The latest screens from the latest games...

BATMAN: VENGEANCE
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Release date: September

Based on *The New Batman Adventures*, this 3D action title has our hero battling against The Joker (played by Mark Hamill) and features gadgets including the Batmobile and the Batplane.

18 WHEELER
Publisher: Acclaim
Release date: July

Convoy capers in Acclaim's second Sega PS2 conversion. Drive a 20 ton lorry from New York to California while competing against an insane rival, the King of the Truckers.

FROGGER: THE GREAT QUEST
Publisher: Konami
Release date: Jan/Feb 2002

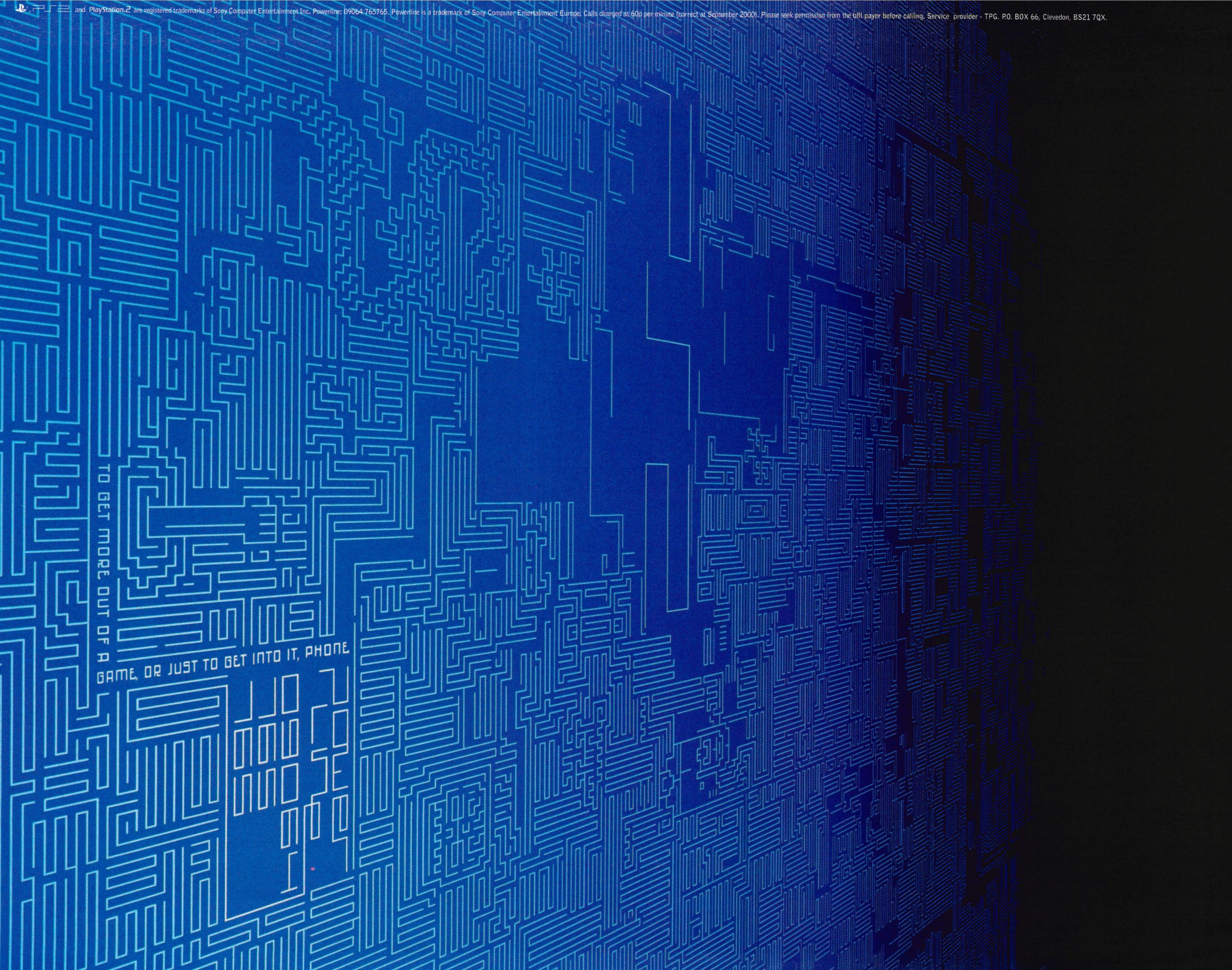
The Eighties 'classic' coin-op returns in a brand-new 3D adventure. Frogger must find a lost princess by climbing, jumping, swimming and spitting through multiple colourful, platform-packed worlds.

MX RIDER
Publisher: Infogrames
Release date: Winter 2001

Officially-licensed with sixteen wild courses from around the world feature exciting competitions with realistic physics, interactive courses, smoothly-animated riders and spectacular stunts.

BLUE LINES

Midway is to re-imagine arcade classic *Defender* as a 3D blastathon with third-person perspective ›› Sir Alex Ferguson leaves Man Utd for 3DO? No, but he's working with the developer on footie management title, *Alex Ferguson's Player Manager 2001* ›› Following on from news of Disney's collaboration with Square on p41, Disney will join forces with Sony to make games based on their animated features including *Atlantis* ›› The UK's first 24 hour game's channel launches on *Sky Digital* channel 223, but half of it's in Italian...



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All made-up with no place to go. The brave *SOCOM* boys contemplate their next move.

SEALS OF APPROVAL

Introducing the revolutionary online squad combat game *SOCOM: US Navy Seals*.

CHANGES ARE AFOOT in the world of PlayStation 2 gaming. Behold the PS2 Network Adapter – not simply a means of surfing the Net with your PS2, but an opportunity to usher in whole new genres of videogame. Sure, there will be titles that utilise the Network Adapter to simply expand upon what would otherwise be a split-screen multiplayer game, but *SOCOM: US Navy Seals* is the first of an exciting new breed of PS2 games being designed specifically with online play in mind.

First things first – what the hell's a Navy Seal? SOCOM stands for Special Operations Command, a division of the US Government that all of the Special Forces report to. The Navy Seals themselves started out as Underwater Demolition Teams in WWII but as it was decided that these crack Commando teams should be trained in all areas of combat, the UDTs evolved into Sea, Air and Land units (Seals, see?). Due to the noticeable lack of world wars post-1945, the Navy Seals are now specifically involved in clandestine operations and counter-guerilla warfare.

Conceived by SCEA and being developed by *MechWarrior 3* fellas Zipper Interactive, this third-person stealth shooter will attempt to convey the skill and nerve required in special forces operations while remaining an approachable prospect for anyone reared on *TimeSplitters* or *Metal Gear Solid*. "If you try to play the hero and take on multiple enemies single-handedly, you'll lose real quick because of the realistic weapon damage," explains producer Seth Luisi. Controls aren't over-simplified, but Luisi believes the system can be learned in less than five minutes of play. "When a game's *too* simple, it's difficult to get any real sense of mastery," he reckons.

Players work as part of a three or four man team with colleagues controlled either by the game's deeply impressive AI or – crucially – fellow humans over the Internet. At E3, two banks of consoles were connected by USB Ethernet adapters, as the official Network Adapter is still at the development stage. Luisi is confident that the completed game will run smoothly whether it is connected to the Internet via the broadband Ethernet or through the analogue modem.

//"I think *SOCOM* is a mass-market online product." Seth Luisi, Game Producer//

And in this future of greater connectivity, squads of Seals and terrorists can stalk each other out in the long grass of Thailand or across the Alaskan tundra. Other confirmed locations include Turkmenistan and the Congo. As both sides can divide into Alpha and Bravo teams, up to 16 players can enter combat together at any one time.

Deflecting fears that *SOCOM* is too much of a PC-style concept to appeal to PS2 gamers, Luisi says, "I think *SOCOM* is a mass-market product to be filed alongside sports games. It could even appeal to people who don't play a lot of other games. The online element makes it really competitive and people always want to be the best."

A slight makeover may be required before the game gets a UK release – may we suggest that the Navy Seals become some division of the SAS? – but expect to be fragging terrorists online early next year. ☐ **SR**

SOCOM on display at E3 last month.

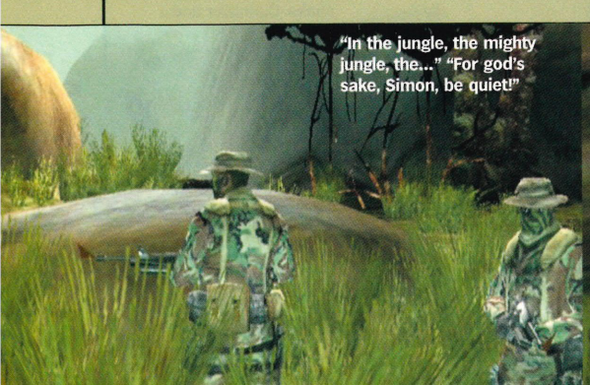
COMMAND AND CONQUER

***SOCOM: US Navy Seals* won't only be the first game to utilise Sony's Network Adapter – it'll also be the first PS2 game to employ decent voice recognition technology. Seth Luisi explains.**

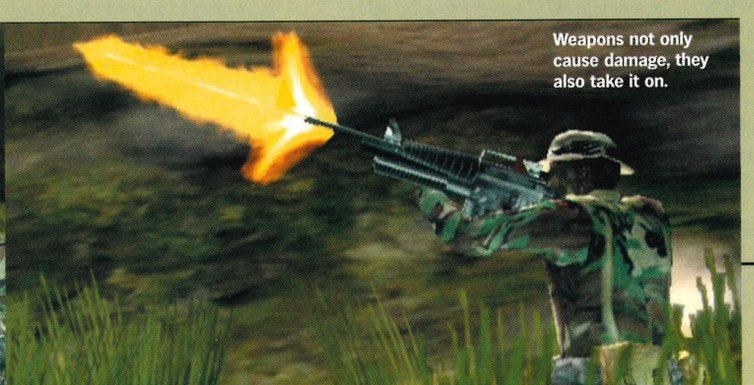
"We want all the commands to be in real-time so you don't spend an hour planning for every three minutes of play. Even so, there are some fairly detailed, context-specific commands in there – for a console user, that could mean a complex interface, which is why we've opted for voice recognition technology."

Promising a decent variety of customisable voice commands, *SOCOM* is set to be the most advanced voice recognition game to date. The accompanying headset will even include an earpiece so that your AI team-mates can offer feedback. Command them to deploy grenades for instance, and they'll be sure to let you know that they're out of ammo, necessitating a change in your strategy.

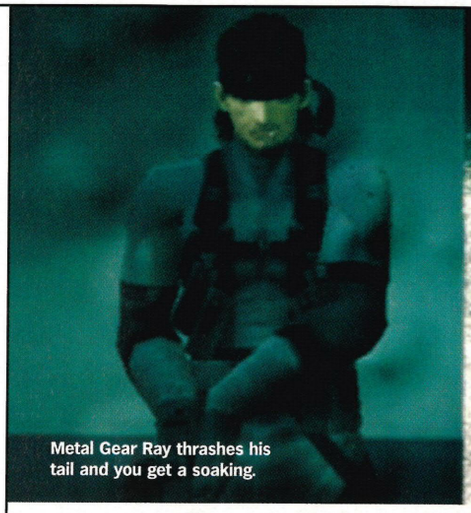
As for the ability to directly speak to human team-mates over the Net, this is proving a little more difficult due to Sony's desire to make the game compatible with analogue modems. "Voice technology over the Internet is fairly easy with cable modems or DSL but a lot harder with analogue. We just want to make sure we can do it properly, so we're not sure yet if this feature will make it in time for release."

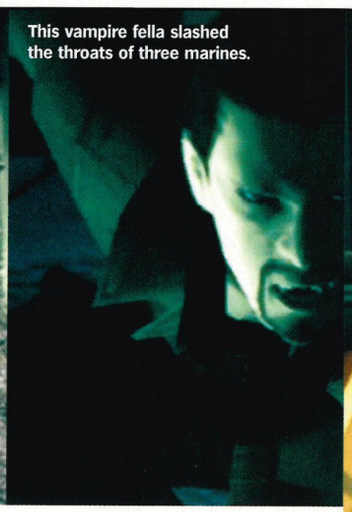


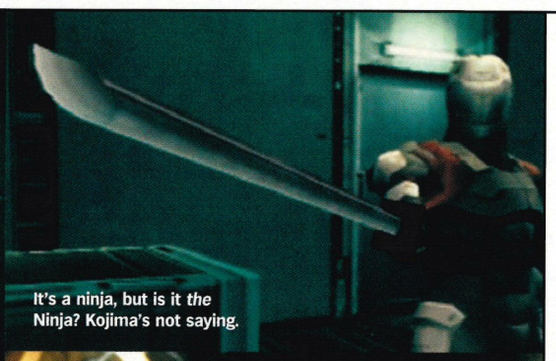
"In the jungle, the mighty jungle, the..." "For god's sake, Simon, be quiet!"

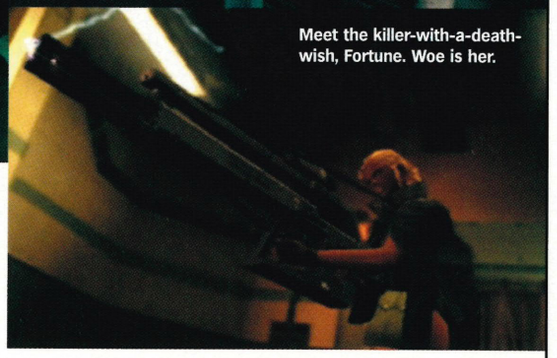


Weapons not only cause damage, they also take it on.


Metal Gear Ray thrashes his tail and you get a soaking.


This vampire fella slashed the throats of three marines.


It's a ninja, but is it *the* Ninja? Kojima's not saying.


Meet the killer-with-a-death-wish, Fortune. Woe is her.

SOLID GONE!

'*Metal Gear Solid 2* Submerges'! In his last interview for months, Hideo Kojima talks exclusively to *OPS2* about pressure, Sony's Hard Disk Drive and a WWII *Metal Gear Solid*.

"I HANDCARRIED MYSELF".

Hideo Kojima has just walked on stage at SCEA's pre-E3 press conference, and apart from announcing his jet lag ("I am groggy") he says nothing. There's no need for he has brought with him a brand-new eight minute trailer of the world's most anticipated PS2 game. Eight stunning minutes later, an audience whoops as one. Kojima smiles, turns on his heels and walks off. Enough said.

Just as it did last year, *Metal Gear Solid 2* turned up at E3 in the form of a new action-rammed trailer. Carrying on from where the playable demo left off, it shows Snake once more on the tanker ship Discovery, this time in a cargo hold listening to the marines who plan to steal Metal Gear Ray. We cut to a 'boss fight' much like the one between Snake and Olga from the first demo. Fortune is a female soldier who wears a Western-style duster jacket but who carries a massive electromagnetic-ray firing cannon that lays waste to everything in its wake. "My name is Fortune. I use up my luck on the battlefield. Even the Grim Reaper has given up on me. Hurry! Kill me, please." Once again, everything appears destructible as fork-lifts, packing crates, boxes and roof struts are blown to bits in a flurry of superb explosive special effects.

The action then cuts back to Snake and the Marines, only they are now joined by Revolver Ocelot. Snake confronts his arch-nemesis who, after a shrouded transformation scene involving his missing arm, replies, "It's been a while, brother!" Could Revolver actually be Liquid, Snake's cloned sibling or... A voiceover jumps in, revealing, "The 43rd President, George Sears. That was the name the public knew him by. I knew him by his codename, 'Solidus Snake'. Neither Solid nor Liquid, a well-balanced masterpiece..."

The trailer then spirals into a whirl of startling new footage, including gorgeous underwater shots, Snake wielding a Stinger rocket launcher against Harrier jump jets, a snapshot of a katana-wielding ninja and a final scene where Metal Gear Ray having trashed the tanker, sends Snake running from a rushing wall of beautifully-realised water.

It's a wonderful sight but one that raises many questions. Why does the opening voiceover say, "The terrorists call themselves 'Sons of Liberty.' And the name of their leader is Solid Snake." What ending was the right one from the original game? Why does Snake say, "I won't die." Why does the voiceover say, "Solid Snake did die. But he's also here. Either he survived, or there are two of them..."

There are plenty of questions to be asked but Hideo Kojima's not answering. *OPS2* spoke to the *Metal Gear* director, but his lips were sealed. Instead Kojima pointed to a promotional *MGS2* flier, printed inside next to the words 'Solid', 'Solidus' and 'Liquid' was the legend, 'Only the snake builds a new world... But the world does not need three snakes.' It also said, 'I will enter covert operations until the resurfacing. And I shall cut off all contact...' Before *MGS2* and Kojima-san submerged for the summer, there was enough time to ask a few burning questions.

Kojima revealed that the success of last year's trailer, "...became a pressure so I had to make sure that this pressure didn't crush us and ensure *MGS2* was going in the right direction." That said, the only changes they had made to the game's direction were, "...minor modifications on how a guy should hold his weapon or whether his hands should move in a certain way."

//"There's a very cute girl in there and also my ideal woman," Kojima on *MGS2*//

As for the new female boss character, Fortune, Kojima revealed, "Fortune uses all of her good luck on the battlefield. People shoot at her, but bullets never hit her. Someone tries to throw a grenade, it's a dud." He also revealed that, "There are definitely more girls in *MGS2* that we haven't shown you! There's a very cute girl in there and there's also my 'ideal girl', who's intelligent, has a career and is beautiful," before revealing that his son also enjoyed kissing the posters inside the lockers!

While he wouldn't be drawn on game specifics ("All I can say, is the world does not need three Snakes... It's all in the game.") Kojima went on to say that he would like to take a look at SCEI's *Ico*, that a *ZOE* sequel was unlikely, there was still "a lot of adjusting to be done" in the game and "lots of sections that simply don't exist yet". Even more encouragingly he said to expect *MGS2* to be much longer than the PSone original.

Most bizarrely, when asked about the possibility of spin-off *Metal Gear* games in other genres such as RPGs, Kojima said that he didn't like these but would personally love to do a *Metal Gear Solid* taking place during World War II. Is Kojima dreaming or can we expect to see a nascent Fox Hound operation starting up in the Forties, taking on the Nazis in an effort to stop their technology experiments? Probably not, but that's what everyone thought about Formula One cars in *Gran Turismo 3: A-spec* and *OPS2* was right about that too...

Expect Kojima-san to reappear some time around this September's Tokyo Game Show. In the meantime, we'll bring you more about Solid, Solidus, Liquid and chums just as soon as we figure out just what's going on. ☐ **MG**

ONLINE ARSENALS?

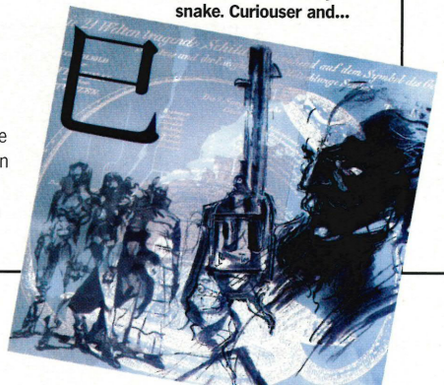
We asked Hideo Kojima whether he had any plans for Sony's freshly-announced Hard Disk Drive and Network Adaptor. Here's what he said.

"What I go for is very simple – fun gameplay. It should be fun as a game. You see many Nintendo games that are fun to play, but I like to add something in addition to that fun – more the sense of satisfaction you can get from reading a book or seeing a movie.

"With regards to online, even if I did include online elements in my game, I wouldn't just have people downloading movie footage. The online element has to add to this fun gameplay. We won't include online content just because it's there – we'll only include it to make the game more fun.

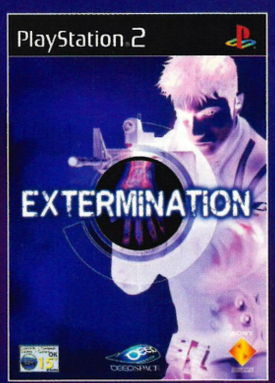
"As for *MGS2*, we're considering doing something with the Hard Disk Drive. We're not sure what but that's our direction. In the future, maybe we could have you downloading an additional weapon or something, but that would just be an additional thing – that's not our online plans."

The promo flier. That kanji symbol means 'snake' and the background shows a globe surrounded by a snake. Curiouser and...

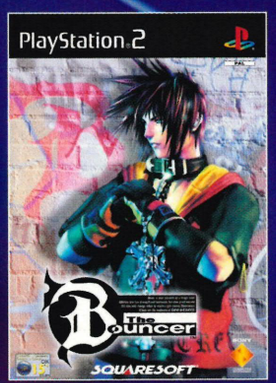


THIS IS YOUR STATION

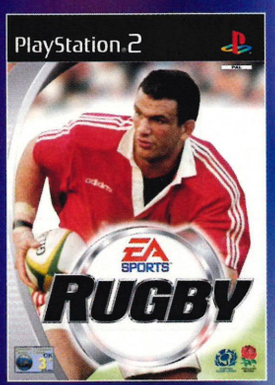
NOW IN STOCK



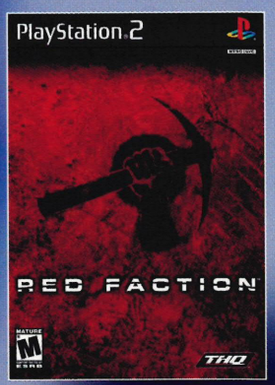
EXTERMINATION



THE BOUNCER



RUGBY

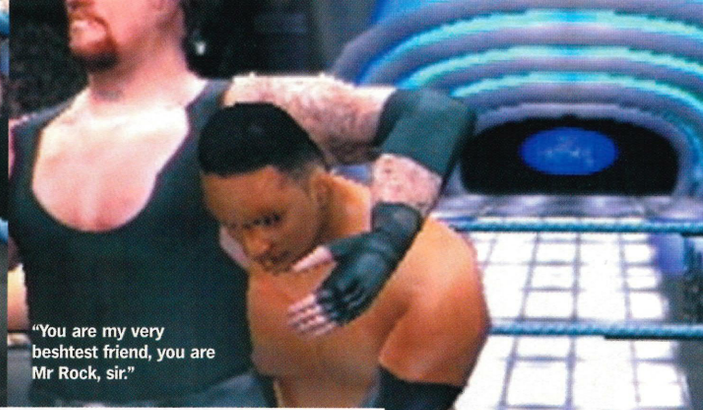


RED FACTION

WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON

Virgin megastores

"Oww, my neck! My beautiful neck!" Mr Undertaker stops The Rock.



"You are my very beshtest friend, you are Mr Rock, sir."

WRESTLEMANIA

WWF SmackDown! gets the baby oil ready for its PS2 debut.

The Rock: Show him *The Mummy*! Ithamkyou.

JUDGING BY THE astonishing success of the *WWF SmackDown* franchise on PSone, this grappling malarkey has now reached a totally mainstream audience. You watch it. We watch it. Every bugger watches it, and thus it's no surprise that this intoxicating melodrama of backroom politics, exaggerated egos and, as the cliche goes, grown men sporting silky Speedos and straggly mullets is heading to PlayStation 2. At this year's E3, THQ officially announced *WWF SmackDown! "Just Bring It!"*.

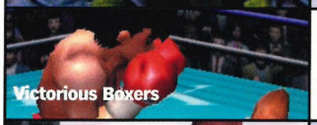
This first wrestler for PS2 – developed by regular Tag team partner and wrestling specialist, Yukes Entertainment – is guaranteed to be an accomplished game that sells by the bucketload. Having played the early code on show at E3, *OPS2* can attest *"Just Bring It!"* will have *SmackDown* fans clothes-lining each other with delight when it's released this autumn. Featuring seven new modes (including Tag Team, Cage matches, Hardcore and the like) and an astonishing 50 WWF champions, *"Just Bring It!"* is comprehensive to say the very least.

MultiTap fans will be happy to hear up to four players can take part in the mayhem and, in a bout we witnessed, nine characters were in the ring at the same time, hitting the hell out of each other with chairs with absolutely no sign of that dreaded slow-down.

Of course, the wrestlers still walk as if they've soiled their pants but fighting moves are as smooth, responsive and varied as last year's *WWF SmackDown! 3* while the well-known faces, such as 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin and The Rock, all look uncannily like the real things, thanks to DigiMask technology. Take a look at these screenshots and you'll see what we mean.

Even at this early stage, it seems *WWF SmackDown! "Just Bring It!"* is lined up to be the Big Daddy of PS2 wrestling games. We'll bring you an exclusive report in a few issue's time when we travel to Yukes' Tokyo HQ for the full skinny. After you with the Savlon. ☐ **LH**

THE GRID #09: The fighting games getting ready to rumble on PS2...

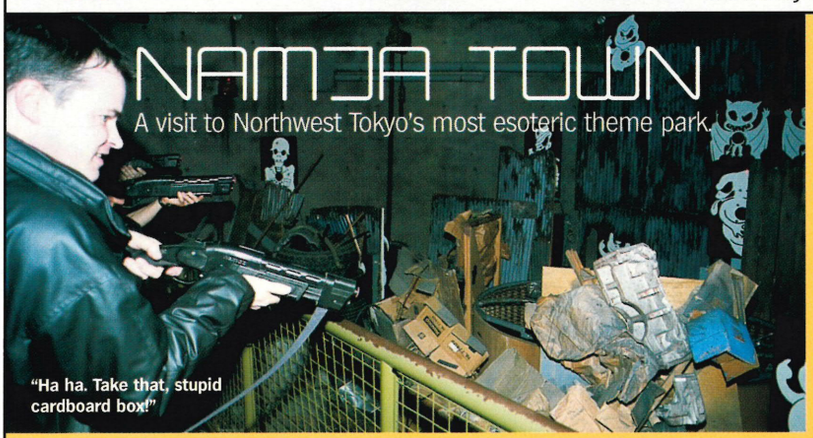
	Tale of the tape	Special moves?	King of Fighters?	(Don't) believe the hype?	Champ or chump?
Virtua Fighter 4	In a move most fight fans thought they'd never see, Sega's legendary *Virtua Fighter* is switching to PS2. The series that revolutionised beat-'em-ups by introducing polygons and 3D, without *VF* there'd be no *Tekken*.	Aside from its classic gameplay, *VF4*'s sexiest feature is VF.NET. This will enable gamers to connect to a *VF4* network through their mobile phones and gain access to functions like world rankings and new combos.	*VF* has a roster of legendary fighters like Sarah Bryant and Lau Chan but the most popular is probably Akira Yuki. Akira is the purists' choice – awkward to play as but also the most rewarding.	"*VF4* is an extension of *VF2* rather than *VF3*. What you see on Naomi 2 [arcade technology used for the coin-op version] we should be able to replicate on PS2 without any problems," says Yu Suzuki, head of AM2.	Considering the original was the instigator of the modern beat-'em-up, *VF4* has a lot to live up to. We reckon Sega AM2 will deliver the most technically advanced and in-depth fighter available. A true champion.
Capcom Vs SNK 2	The biggest names in the 2D beat-'em-up genre come together for the ultimate battle. Boasting fighters from Capcom's *Street Fighter* series and SNK's *King of Fighters*, the original game thrilled 2D fight fans.	*Capcom Vs SNK*'s stand-out feature is its Groove system. This allows you to choose whether to fight in the Capcom or SNK style – the power bar charges once for SNK, three times for Capcom.	A massive 44 characters from Capcom and SNK will be available, with *Street Fighter* legends like Ken, Ryu and the thunder-thighed Chun-Li facing-off against SNK heroes, Terry Bogard, Benimaru and 2D sexpot, Mai.	'Two of the world's fighting giants return in this colossal slug-fest! *Capcom Vs SNK 2* unleashes lightning fast animation and classic arcade fighting action on the PS2.' A Capcom press release.	2D beat-'em-ups may be considered a little passé after the likes of *Soul Calibur*, *DOA2* and *Virtua Fighter*. But there is still a loyal market for 2D games and for them, *Capcom VS SNK 2* will be a champion.
Mortal Kombat	One of the bestselling franchises in videogame history, the violent martial arts of the *Mortal Kombat* series has garnered over $100 million and expanded into movies and toys. Despite being a bit rubbish.	*Mortal Kombat*'s infamy and dubious popularity are due to the gruesome nature of its scraps. Featuring far more blood and guts than rival beat-'em-ups, fans adore its spine-crunching fatalities.	Ice ninja, Sub-Zero is a renowned *MK* name but the series' most famous protagonists are the heroic god of thunder, Rayden who fires lightning projectiles, and his nemesis, the evil god, Shinnok who fights in a red hat.	"As the first of the series did, this all-new *Mortal Kombat* will reinvent the fighting game genre with never-before-seen features and a new fighting engine," says Helene Sheeler, Vice-President of marketing, Midway.	The fifth *Mortal Kombat* will be released in the Autumn of 2002 and despite claims of reinvention, we predict this burned out old ninja will hit the canvas after having its neck snapped. Referee's verdict: Chump.
 Victorious Boxers	Striking a balance between the realism of *Knockout Kings* and the knockabout arcade larks of *Ready 2 Rumble*, *Victorious Boxers* appears to be in tip-top condition for a genuine attempt at the PS2 World Boxing belt.	Unlike most sports games, there's an in-depth Story mode with emphasis on career progression. Improving your fighter's skills and learning new moves are necessary if you're going to progress to that big title fight.	You play Ippo who meets an old boxing trainer and steps out on the long road to pugilistic success. Starting at the bottom, you guide him up the rankings and try to earn a crack at the world title.	"This continues our strategy of publishing quality third party games as well as our own. We're delighted we can introduce the best boxing game into Europe and the US," says Empire Interactive CEO Ian Higgins.	With rave reviews accompanying its Japanese release and a prestigious Gold Award from Famitsu, *Victorious Boxers* must be quite tasty in the ring. Could become champ at the expense of *R2R: R2* and *KK 2001*.
State Of Emergency	An urban riot game, *State Of Emergency* has you battling against the oppressive ATO regime by wandering around a city beating the crap out of everyone and everything with benches, bricks and stuff.	Fully interactive environments to destroy, a great selection of weapons to destroy them with (grenades, flame-throwers, lead piping, trashcans) and a vast number of hilariously anti-social missions to complete.	Choose between five different Resistance agents who are all fighting to overthrow the evil ATO. We're hoping for a secret Prescott boss character who can be used to batter right-wing, yokel farmers.	'The first game to let you participate in street combat with over 100 people on screen at once! *State Of Emergency* is for those who've ever wondered what it's like to be in a city out of control.' Rockstar press release.	Having played it at E3, we're extremely impressed with *SOE*. Any game that lets you petrol bomb rival gangs and attack innocent bystanders using dismembered body parts as weapons, is a potential champ.
Legends Of Wrestling	With that sweaty behemoth *WWF SmackDown!* currently ruling the roost (see above) Acclaim is getting into the wrestling ring with its own grappler *Legends Of Wrestling*, which celebrates the history of the sport.	There will be 'more than 12 bone-breaking match types' in the game but as far as we're concerned, the greatest feature is the Create-A-Stencil, used to add logos and text to the wrestlers' Lycra outfits. Mmm.	Over 30 famous grapplers will be playable including Jake 'The Snake' Roberts and Jerry 'The King' Lawler. Best of the bunch is probably Bret 'The Hitman' Hart – he's the only one we've actually heard of.	'*Legends Of Wrestling* is the first-ever wrestling game to combine all of the greatest superstars from all over the world in one place, and the action takes place both in the ring and in the crowd!' An Acclaim press release.	Compared to the big-name licence and gazillion options attached to *WWF SmackDown! "Just Bring It!"*, *Legends Of Wrestling* seems severely lacking. Expect a cowardly submission in the first. Chump.
Tekken 4	The fourth in Namco's hit series was announced at E3. No info or game footage was unveiled but there was a short video displaying new images of veterans like Paul and King, with the tagline, 'The fight of your life.'	We can only speculate about *T4*'s features. A Tag mode is a certainty, as is a bizarre mini-game and a plot revolving around the Heihachi dynasty. A fighting chimp called Derek would be a bonus.	Derek, the all-new fighting chimp would obviously win the Iron Fist tournament. If that isn't included, expect Jin Kazama and his secret, sex-changed twin-sister Janice (previously Jon) to battle it out in the final.	'Please to tell you Namco's super fight series *Tekken 4* coming to PlayStation 2 in Winter 2002. New fighters and new fighting modes will included, plus graphics that feast on the eyes!' Made-up press release.	Considering the steadily increasing quality of the franchise, *Tekken 4* is bound to turn out to be something special. With only one new fighter named for this latest version, we still label this a champion. Of course.
Soul Calibur 2	Announced at E3 by Namco with but an invitation 'back to the stage of history' for 'the next chapter in *Soul Calibur*'. As the game can rightly be called the best beat-'em-up ever, we dribble at the prospect of a sequel.	*Soul Calibur 2* can only polish the the genius gameplay found in the original. As a weapons-based fighter *Soul Calibur* requires a different approach to most beat-'em-ups – rapid moves rather than combos.	The *Soul* series hasn't got as big a cast as *Tekken* but there is an eclectic and fantastic bunch of fighters, all of whom are likely to return. Voldo the gimp, pole-boy Kilik, dominatrix Ivy, well-hard Mitsurugi..	"*Soul Calibur* on DC with its incredibly fast and slick graphics and cool fighters carrying huge weapons, is the most enjoyable beat-'em-up I've ever played. The sequel could be amazing." Biased ex-*DC-UK* editor.	The original *Soul Calibur* resides Saint-like in beat-'em-up heaven, providing the sequel learns well from the master, *Soul Calibur 2* has the potential to become the undisputed World Champion.

SPY in japan

Edited by **Amos Wong.**

NAMJA TOWN

A visit to Northwest Tokyo's most esoteric theme park.



"Ha ha. Take that, stupid cardboard box!"

PHOTO: JAMES COPE

ATTRACTING OVER SIX million visitors since its 1996 opening, the Namja Town theme park located in Ikebukuro's Sunshine Tower consists of two levels divided into several Sixties-themed districts. On the first level a downtown Tokyo area has been recreated, complete with shrines, a traditional Japanese festival street, eateries and shops. Full of old-world charm, it's almost like a historical museum, thanks to displays of classic records and movie paraphernalia. Attractions include throwing fake fried noodles onto spinning plates (twirled by giant kittens!) for prizes, sumo dodgems and zapping bloodsucking pests, from vehicles shaped like a traditional mosquito coil holder. Which happen to be pig shaped. A Japanese ghost town features an obstacle laden tricycle course for the kids and various ghoulish gimmicks: a guillotine contraption drops a snarling (and rubbery) beast, to dangle centimetres from your face. In another section, light gun-toting punters decimate hordes of ghosts in a shooting gallery-like maze.

More techy entertainment lies a level up, though people prone to motion sickness should think twice before riding the Firebull attack helicopter simulator – if the frantic blasting action viewed from VR headsets doesn't make your head spin, the hydraulically mounted helicopter pods will.

A row of American shopfronts lead the way to an Italian-themed food court, graced with a merry-go-round. Romantics can snuggle in a giant shell and make a wish, during a fortune-telling ride that involves throwing coins into jars held by statues. Needless to say, an arcade area can also be found. To get the most out the interactive displays and quiz games, fluent Japanese is essential so taking a native language speaking friend is a must. ☐ **AW**

PREVIEW! PREVIEW!

GOOD BEAT

For those who like hitting things really hard, *Tam Tam Paradise* is just the ticket. Yet another PS2 rhythm game with spectacularly underwhelming graphics, you simply bash the left or right pad on the special controller according to the on-screen prompts – being an analogue peripheral, make sure you hit with the appropriate strength indicated. Set on a stage in the style of a traditional Japanese theatre, expect to be heckled and pummelled with rotten fruit, should your performance be under par.

Playing. For months. Must. Sleep. Soon...

CHANNEL GAME!

CHECK I-TV

Here's the deal: connect an i-Mode mobile to your PS2 and register your personal details. Download the day's 'virtual' TV shows (it takes just two minutes) and view one that takes your fancy, from reviews, celebrity chats and popular topic rankings. Submit any comments or questions you may have – even a rant for the personal problems show – and then sit back and see if they incorporate them into the programming.

GO GO HOT TOY!

CORE TOYS

Highly rated in gaming bible *Famitsu*, *Armored Core 2: Another Age* fans with spare change after buying the game and USB modem (*AC* is now online compatible) can buy the new mecha figures. Due for imminent release, the poseable toys come with assorted weaponry and armaments, but unfortunately can't be pulled apart or combined with others. Japanese gamers will soon need a second house just to stash merchandising!

PS2 CHART!

JAPANESE TOP 10

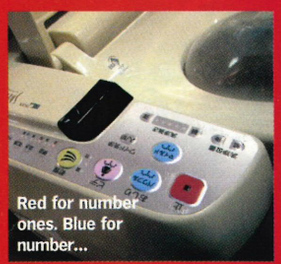
***Armoured Core* heads online for its *Another Age* sequel.**

1. **ARMOURED CORE 2: ANOTHER AGE** (FROM SOFTWARE)
2. **KESSEN II** (KOEI)
3. **WORLD SOCCER WINNING ELEVEN 5** (KONAMI)
4. **BIO HAZARD CODE: VERONICA COMPLETE** (CAPCOM)
5. **TALL LOVE STORY 3** (ENTERBRAIN)
6. **KOUTETSU (KUROGANE) NO HOUKOU – WARSHIP COMMANDER** (KOEI)
7. **GALLOP RACER 5** (TECMO)
8. **MONSTER FARM** (TECMO)
9. **SHUTOKO BATTLE 0** (GENKI)
10. **JITSUMEI JIKKYO KEIBA DREAM CLASSIC 2001 SPRING** (BANDAI)

**Chart source:* Famitsu PS2 *(11-25/5/2001)*

30 DAYS IN TOKYO

A MONTH IN THE LIFE OF *OPS2*'S MAN IN JAPAN, AMOS WONG



Red for number ones. Blue for number...

Day 10
Show the lads visiting from *OPS2*'s sister mag *T3* around Tokyo. Specifically, toilet showrooms! You see, a mere flush handle doesn't cut it over here. With an armrest that resembles the USS Enterprise's comm, units come with features like a water spray for extra cleanliness, and a heated seat that makes those chilly morning purges more comfortable. Some models even have motion sensors that automatically raise the seat – handy for fellas. The ultimate? Wireless control panels! And no, that red button isn't an arse massager. *[Erm, Amos? You okay? – Concerned Ed]*

Day 12
Guess I picked the wrong day to do my gadget shopping. Being the launch of *GT3: A-spec*, it's chaos at Ikebukuro's Bic Camera store. Managed to find the wind-up toy figures I've been after though – old duffers doing their exercise. Power them up and they'll do sit-ups and chin-ups until they collapse.

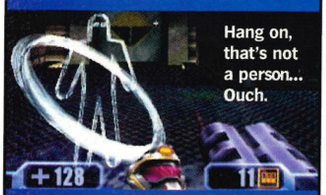
Day 13
Questionable food, water slides and stomach churning rides abound at the Toshimaen fun park. A Japanese horror house teeming with creaky dolls of oriental spirits fails to scare; however not far away is the Bio Hazard (ie *Resident Evil*) 4-D Executer attraction. The eight minute, 3D CG movie set in Raccoon City is guaranteed to make punters scream like a girl, thanks to special chairs that shake violently during tense moments. Not to mention extra gimmicks designed to shock your senses… but I'd probably get in trouble with Capcom if I spilled the beans.

Day 25
Tempted by the *Final Fantasy X* figure campaign, I buy my first bottle of Coca-Cola in ages. The drink still hasn't been touched, although the figure has. With 32 figures to collect, I bettered get saving for a bigger fridge.

SPY

INVENTORY

Your one-stop guide to the PS2 power-ups.



#09: THE INVISIBILITY DEVICE

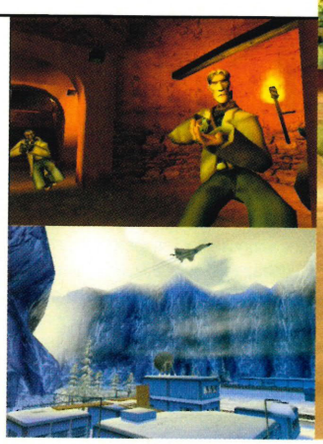
Oh, I know this one! It's... No. What is it?
...

Please?
Alright. Invisibility devices come in many forms but their function is the same. To give you a temporary state of Unseeable-Thereness™.

I see. Why would I want to do that?
In a word, mischief. In 34 words, to disprove the maxim that 'what you can't see won't hurt you' by making it easy to walk brazenly up to opponents pull down their fatigues and shoot laserbullets where the sun don't shine.

Sounds great! But if they're invisible, how do I spot one?
Mercifully the devices themselves are easy to see. Indeed, Solid Snake's stealth suit was so visible that everyone in the building could see it.

Does it have any drawbacks?
Yes. They only tend to work for very short periods, usually cutting out halfway across a cavern rammed solid with enemy grunts. Oh, and despite similar spelling 'invisible' is not the same as 'invincible'. An invisible gaping gunshot wound is still going to require Savlon and a fabric plaster.



Cap'n Birdseye reacted badly to his being axed from the Fish Fingers ads. Arrgh.

A LITTLE MORE TIME

Feast your eyes on the world's first *TimeSplitters 2* screenshots.

LAST ISSUE, *OPS2* brought you the world exclusive on the sequel to one of the PS2's biggest smashes – *TimeSplitters 2*. Now developer Free Radical Design has unleashed tantalising screenshots. showing how the team are expanding the breadth and scope of this glorious time travelling first-person blaster.

"All of the technology side is going to be massively improved and the gameplay is going to be a lot better, particularly in Story mode," says Managing Director David Doak. "I think one of the criticisms was, 'Well, it's not *GoldenEye* is it?'. We didn't forget how to make something like that game, we just wanted to make something a little bit different for our first game. I'm sure we can make something that'll receive the same kind of praise as *GoldenEye*."

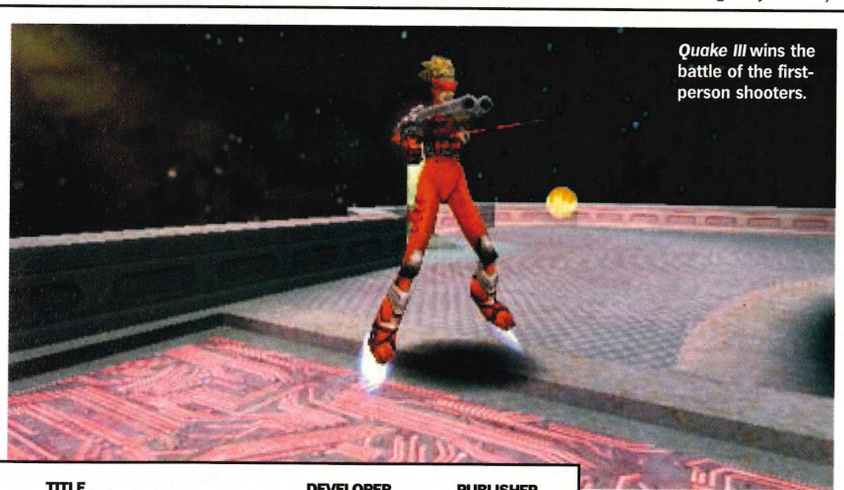
TimeSplitters 2 will offer a more involving single-player and co-operative Story mode stretching back to 1850s USA, with a narrative supported by cut-scenes and vastly more complex textures and animation. As reported in *OPS2*#08, the game is endowed with a huge new cast list that has relations of original characters such as Gretel Mk II and newcomers including Neo Tokyo cyberjock, Hacker Ninja.

"I hope that people like the characters as much as we do," continues Doak. "That was the big thing – to get away from the constraints in something like *GoldenEye* where you're limited by the period and the genre, or *Quake* and *Unreal* where all of the characters are stereotypical adolescent fantasies. In *TimeSplitters* a lot of them are tongue in cheek."

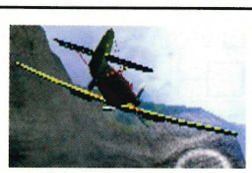
An upgraded MapMaker will appear allowing further opportunities to design nightmarish levels, as will the legendary multiplayer deathmatches, supporting i-Link for chaining multiple PS2's together and possibly even online connectivity through SCE's forthcoming Network Adaptor. With new scenarios ranging from Aztec jungle to futuristic *Blade Runner*-esque cities plus plenty of humour, *TimeSplitters 2* could eclipse the success of the original when it hits the shelves next Spring through Eidos. ☐ **JS**

HMV PS2 CHARTS

Brought to you in conjunction with HMV.

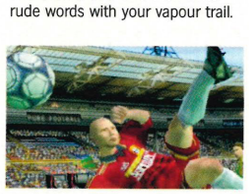

Quake III wins the battle of the first-person shooters.

	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER
1.	**QUAKE III REVOLUTION**	Bullfrog	Electronic Arts
2.	**UNREAL TOURNAMENT**	Epic Games	Infogrames
3.	**TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001**	EA Sports	EA Sports
4.	**SKY ODYSSEY**	Cross (for SCEI)	SCEE
5.	**STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER**	LucasArts	Activision
6.	**ZONE OF THE ENDERS**	KCEJ (West)	Konami
7.	**SHADOW OF MEMORIES**	KCET	Konami
8.	**SSX**	EA Sports (Canada)	EA Sports Big!
9.	**SUMMONER**	Volition	THQ
10.	**FIFA 2001**	EA Sports (Canada)	EA Sports



#4: SKY ODYSSEY
Straight in at number four, this original and very playable arcade flight sim is proving to be a classic 'sleeper hit'. Fly different missions in a variety of planes, helicopters and even a UFO and then write rude words with your vapour trail.

#1: QUAKE III REVOLUTION
Blood-spattering first-person shooters are proving as popular on PS2 as they are PCs – and no wonder, with Bullfrog's superb conversion of *Quake III Revolution*. Blistering frame rate, and a brilliant Multiplayer mode.



#10: FIFA 2001
EA Sports' perennial footie knockabout is still proving to be popular more than seven months after its original release. Stunning graphics and presentation, only let down by simplistic in-game action making it too easy to score goals.

topdogforgames
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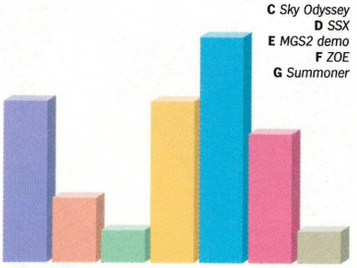
FACT BELCH

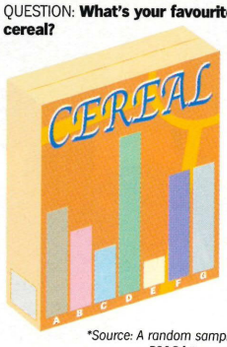
WE set the questions. YOU give the answers.

QUESTION: **What PS2 game has impressed you most so far?**

A *Quake III*
B *Shadow Of Memories*
C *Sky Odyssey*
D *SSX*
E *MGS2 demo*
F *ZOE*
G *Summoner*



QUESTION: **What's your favourite breakfast cereal?**



A Frosties
B Crunchy Nut Cornflakes
C Weetos
D Cornflakes
E Golden Grahams
F Coco Pops
G Weetabix

**Source: A random sample of readers' replies to PS2@futurenet.co.uk. It could be you!*

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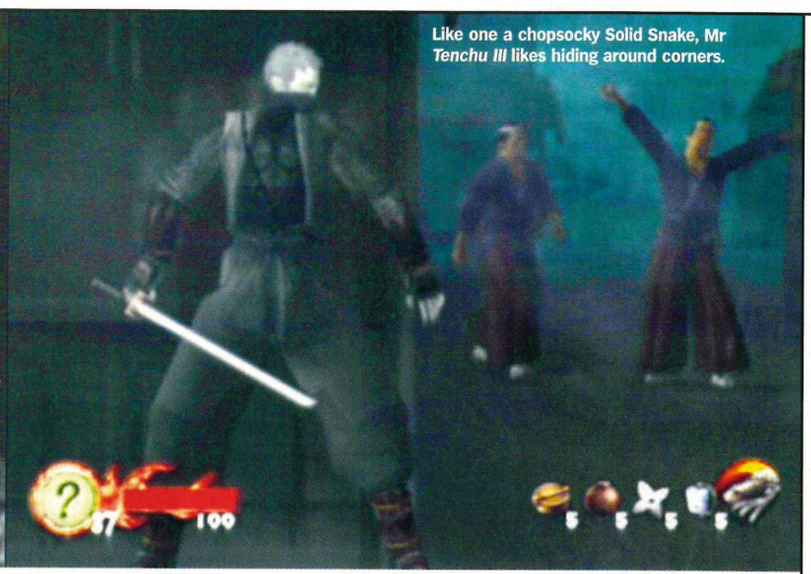
EA SPORTS BIG

Given it's only 10% complete, you can forgive *Tenchu III*'s currently 'dark and atmospheric' looks.



Like one a chopsocky Solid Snake, Mr *Tenchu III* likes hiding around corners.

IN GOOD STEALTH

Ninja lovers rewarded with an early flash of *Tenchu III*'s equipment at E3.

THERE WAS A time when ninja games were as lacking in finesse as Inspector Clouseau's hapless sidekick Kato. Much in the same way that *Metal Gear* overhauled the third-person action game, *Tenchu*'s combination of stealth, puzzles, cool gadgets (most notably a grappling hook) and meticulously-crafted missions made this not so much *Shinobi* in 3D but a full-on ninja simulator. Now the sequel to PSone's best ninja games is creeping its deadly way over to PS2 courtesy of Osaka-based developer K2 LLC.

Like its forebears, the game is set in feudal Japan in the late 16th Century with the story taking place a year after the original game (*Tenchu II* was a prequel). So far, just an impressive glimpse of a gloomy village level has been granted (complete with great animation and realistic rain) although you should expect a total of at least nine stages based on richly detailed environments which far surpass those in the PSone games. The finished game promises locales such as bamboo forests and Japanese castles packed with devious traps and intricate puzzles.

"Although it's only around 10% complete at the moment, it'll be closer to *Tenchu I* than *II*. Our motto for this development cycle is 'polish' rather than new features and game size," reveals Tad Horie, the game's associate producer. "The maps will be as big as *Tenchu II* but without the parts where there's little to do. All areas will have some kind of meaning to them."

In place of daytime missions and the ability to move dead bodies around to your black heart's content are a greater variety of stealth kills – eight in total – innovative use of lighting, weather effects, route branches and a Two-player mode that will most likely include both head-to-head and co-operative play. "There will be a lot of other surprises I think," adds Horie. Let's hope a delay isn't one of them when Activision publish *Tenchu III* in 2002. ☐ **JB**

//"Our motto for this development cycle of *Tenchu III* is 'polish'." Tad Horie, Associate Producer//

Ico: A mysterious castle, a ghost called Yorda and a most horny hero.

ODD WORLD

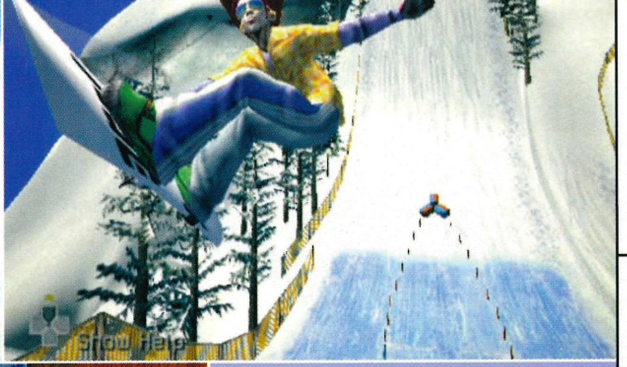
SCEI's ethereal adventure *Ico* impresses at E3.

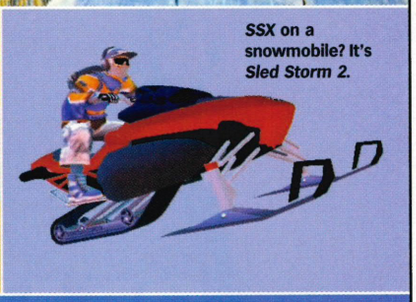
YOU WOULD'VE BEEN forgiven for missing *Ico* at the recent E3 videogames extravaganza in the US. SCEI's new adventure was announced with little of the fanfare and accompanying hype of games like *Jak and Daxter*, but could turn out to be one of the PlayStation 2's most original outings.

Ico is the main character, a young boy born with horns who is banished to a medieval castle (via a coffin!) by local superstitious villagers believing him to be an incarnation of the devil. In the game our hero encounters a ghostly apparition of a girl named Yorda who is also trapped in the bowels of the ancient fortress. Ico can interact with her, leading Yorda along by the hand through the foreboding corridors, using her to solve puzzles, climb ledges and save his life when dangling precariously from dangerously high places.

What's truly unique about *Ico* is the otherworldly atmosphere, with the main characters wandering around a tranquil, but fantastically-realised castle environment complete with meandering, beautifully-lit staircases, massive outdoor courtyards and dusty passageways infested with creatures conjured up by a mysterious dark sorceress. Currently in development by way of one of SCEI's studios, *Ico* is a wonderfully atmospheric adventure that *Metal Gear*'s Hideo Kojima revealed to us as the one PS2 game he wanted to check out at E3. No concrete news on a UK release as yet but *OPS2* remains confident we'll see *Ico* over here in early 2002. ☐ **JS**

New *SSX* tracks will include some very steep inclines from the Canadian Rockies.





SSX on a snowmobile? It's *Sled Storm 2*.

SNOW BUSINESS

All the latest on the EA Sports Big announcements of *SSX Tricky* and *Sled Storm 2*.

PLAYSTATION 2 IS ABOUT to get even cooler with the imminent release of two cracking snow-based titles from arcade extreme sports label EA Sports Big. First up is a DVD-enhanced version of snowboarding smash *SSX*, currently titled *SSX Tricky*. The game improves upon the original release with graphical enhancements that'll see a much smoother frame rate, freshly recorded voices for the original characters from Hollywood celebrities including Lucy Liu, Billy Zane and the incomprehensible soul gargler Macy Gray, plus six completely new boarders.

All the original courses are being dug up and totally redesigned to include more spectacular jumps, twists and short cuts, plus two brand new tracks will add extra value for money. However, the major upgrade will be the new combo tricks taken from the worlds of BMX, skateboarding and even motocross. These are difficult to pull off, but when executed successfully, will have characters flipping the board freely beneath them and demonstrating some breath-taking moves. *SSX Tricky*'s DVD format also means more music tracks, character cut-scenes and behind-the-scenes featurettes showing the making of the game and outtakes from the Hollywood celebs' voiceover sessions.

A sequel to the well-received PSone snowmobile title *Sled Storm* is next up for EA Sports Big. Inevitably entitled *Sled Storm 2*, the game is looking like being a souped-up, motorised version of *SSX*. Courses are bulging with opportunities for gravity-defying leaps across perilous ravines, cheeky short cuts and tricks along the roofs of ski lodges and down spine-disintegrating cliffs. *Sled Storm 2* has a choice of six different sleds and impresses graphically with realistic-looking snow spraying into the camera and smoothly animated vehicles. Both these exciting sub-zero action games are scheduled for a winter 2001 release. ☐ **JS**

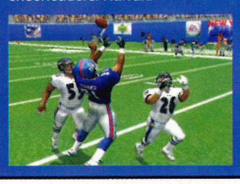
HYPER SPORTS

EA Sports' 2001 line-up.

Along with knockabout basketball game *NBA Street*, *Sled Storm 2* and the semi-sequel *SSX Tricky*, vibrant upstart EA Sports Big has an envious selection of titles hitting PS2 this year. However, its less exuberant, sensible older brother EA Sports also has a shower of familiar franchises heading our way.

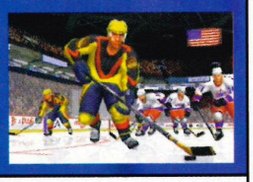
FIFA 2002
The latest in the very popular footie series concentrates on improving gameplay through intuitive free passing and more intelligent team-mates. Lead producer Kerry Whalen says the new *FIFA*, "Feels like football should."

Madden NFL 2002
Can those helmets be any shinier? Yes, according to early information from EA Sports, which has concentrated on improved visuals that will include realistic facial expressions and more cheerleaders. Hurrah.



F1 Championship Season 2001
With the excellent *Formula One 2001* from SCEE currently first on the PS2 podium, EA Sports is hoping the new improved version of its racer will have fans of grand prix frothing with glee.

NHL 2002
More evolution than revolution, EA's PS2 puck-about will have better animation, gameplay tweaks including better goalie AI plus collectible NHL cards a la *Madden NFL* for cheats and other bonuses.



shorts

›› *Tekken 4* and *Soul Calibur 2* – it's official! Namco has confirmed these hotly anticipated sequels will be coming to PS2 by showing enigmatic teaser trailers at E3. No in-game visuals were on show but there was new character artwork. The *Tekken 4* trailer showed familiar faces King and Hwoarang alongside a new, unnamed fighter…

›› Competition for *Splashdown*? Eidos is to publish *Wave Riders*, a water based racer with an official 'Jetski' licence from brand manufacturers Kawasaki. The game's developer Opus was responsible for the unimpressive *H3O*, but given the water physics were the best bit of that title, and *Wave Rider*'s high profile licence, a repeat performance of that low standard is unlikely.

›› New PS2 developer Universal Interactive Studios have announced *Jurassic Park: Survival* for PS2. Set to be released alongside the third movie in the popular dinosaur franchise, *JP:S* will feature an original plot and characters. The 3D action adventure boasts a '*Die Hard* with dinosaurs' scenario pitting its protagonist David Vaughan against DNA stealing terrorists as well as T-Rex and his scaly mates.

›› *Last Ninja* is back for more. Insanely popular in the days of the Commodore 64 (it received the industry's first 100% score) Studio 3 Interactive's *Last Ninja* franchise is being resurrected on next-gen consoles including PS2. *The Return* will feature the titular black jim-jam wearing hero on a mission to master the ways of agility, strength, stealth, intelligence, speed and courage in order to defeat the evil warlord, Kunitoki. More soon.

›› Best of both worlds? Virgin Interactive are bringing disparate genres together in *Maelstrom*. With substantial creative input from *Judge Dredd* scribe and artist, Robbie Morrison and Jim Murray, *Maelstrom* has two factions of pirates battling to weaken the defenses of space cruisers before boarding and taking the battle for booty into first-person territory.

›› The battle for the clunkiest PS2 game title hots up with the announcement of puzzler *Super Bubble Pop*'s port from PC. The game features candy colour graphics, *Bust-A-Move* style gameplay and 150 levels which can be supplemented by using the data in downloaded MP3s to create new levels in *Vib Ribbon*-esque style. If you're interested, PC owners can download a demo of the game at www.real.com right now.

BLUELINES

Midway has launched a massive 2002 line-up of 15 new titles including unknowns like *Red Card Soccer* and *Insane Terrain Snowboarding* along with anticipated games like *Spy Hunter* ›› THQ is going all out for 'cute' with *Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius*, a third-person adventure based on Nickelodeon's latest white-hot cartoon property ›› *Pac-Man World 2* is being developed for PS2 by Namco, as is *Moto GP 2* and *Klonoa 2* ›› *Dave Mirra's Freestyle BMX 2* will wheelie its way to PS2 courtesy of Acclaim Max Sports

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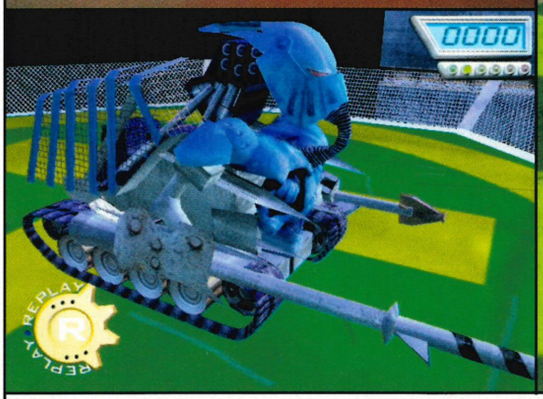
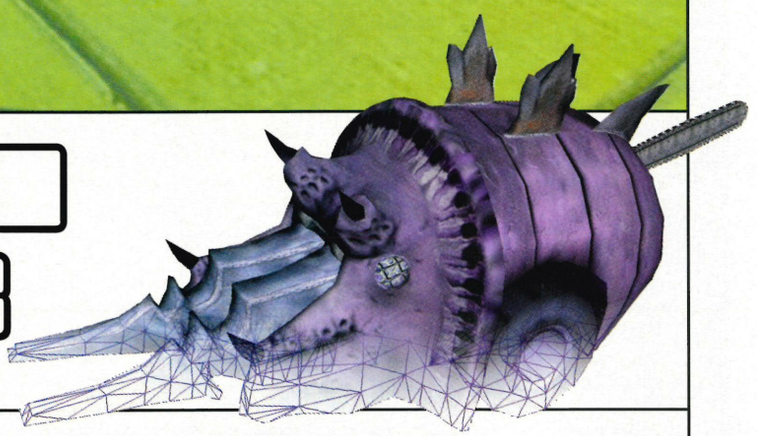


Despite the Replay icon, these are in-game *Robot Wars* shots as played by *Spaced* boy, Sefton.

WELCOME TO ROBOT CLUB



Activate! Climax brings Auntie's *Robot Wars* to PlayStation 2.

SGT BASH. HYPNO DISC. Sir Killalot. Names that to fans of the incredibly popular (but let's be honest, slightly geeky) BBC TV series *Robot Wars*, will conjure up images of fast-moving, violent machines hacking, gouging and smashing large chunks out of each other. *OPS2* was invited to Climax Studios in Fareham to see the sparks fly in the upcoming metal ass-kicking PS2 title based on the cult TV series.

Firstly, if you're expecting the new game to be a 'kiddie' TV spin-off – rewire your brain immediately. Interactive Producer at the BBC, Colin Fuidge, says that they want *Robot Wars* on PS2 to be, "Dirty, underground, futuristic, mechanised cock-fighting." Over 50 ready-made machines are on show including all those mean and moody house robots such as Matilda and Shunt, along with a host of popular competitors from the series.

Roboteers take a world tour of themed arenas such as a New York steel factory and a Japanese neon-soaked skyscraper, packed with dangerous hazards including cranes that can pick up your unsuspecting robot and drop them deftly into a powerful crusher. As players progress through the battle-scarred environments, money is earned to buy robots with tougher body shells and more destructive appendages – building and naming your own creations is a hugely appealing part of the game (see It's Alive!).

Although *Robot Wars* is still in development, *OPS2* played a very polished (sorry) early version, with a physics engine that had barrels toppling over and bits flying off robots to reveal vulnerable internal components. "It's going to be very realistic," says Climax producer Barry Simpson. "If someone knocks two of the wheels off and the robot can't steer any more, then it's immobilised – just like in the TV show." Climax has consulted actual robot builders to ensure that the Dual Shock 2 gives that radio-controlled feel, plus 'mesh deformation' will show dents and scratches, contributing to the brutal experience that the producers crave.

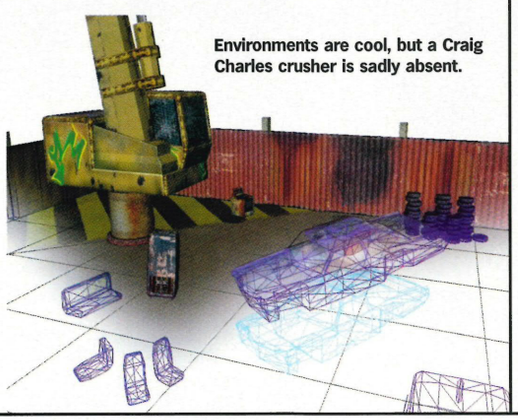
Apart from the main event, gamers will also be able to enjoy a collection of excellent pick-up-and-play arcade thrashes for one or two players. There are one-on-one deathmatches, knockout competitions, Capture the Flag games and the superb Mad Bomber, where combatants bash into each other to pass on an explosive device – if you're left with the bomb when the timer reaches zero, say welcome to robo-heaven. Add to that smooth detailed graphics, cheering crowds, TV-style replays and commentary by hyperbolic ear drum-burster Jonathan Pearce and you have a PS2 title that should provide hours of metal mayhem. *Robot Wars* will be ready to activate on 30 November. ☐ **JS**

//"Dirty, underground, futuristic, mechanised cock-fighting..." The Beeb's brief for *Robot Wars* on PS2//

IT'S ALIVE!

Beat the robo-engineers at their own game.

One of the major gameplay elements of *Robot Wars* on PlayStation 2 will be the Robot Builder. This ingenious feature allows players to assemble a mechanical fighting machine from hundreds of components including different types of chassis, body shells made of varying materials, weapons such as flame-throwers and chainsaws, plus silly extras to personalise your robot. Players can also rummage around in a scrapyard for unique parts garnered from other destroyed competitors. All the arenas have various challenges, so gamers have to create a garage of robots with different strengths – for example, traction is better for pulling machines up steep slopes. Robots can then be given a name (no swearing, please) and saved to Memory Card to swap with fellow roboteers.



Environments are cool, but a Craig Charles crusher is sadly absent.

Forget the 2D landscapes of the past – *Maximo* is 21st Century 3D.

"I knew I'd left my bloody keys around here somewhere."

GRAVEYARD SHIFT

Capcom announces their "tribute" to *Ghosts 'n' Goblins – Maximo: Ghosts To Glory.*

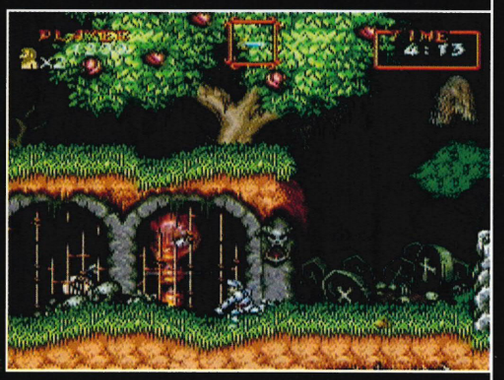
IF YOU THINK Capcom, your head will probably swell with images from titles like zombie-splattering horror *Resident Evil*, and the bloody Samurai sword-slashing of *Onimusha: Warlords*. However, in the classic coin-op era of the Eighties, Capcom was syphoning ten pence pieces out of pockets with *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*, a side-scrolling platform game starring a plucky knight battling against various undead foes through various haunted caves, forests and graveyards (see Ghosts Of The Past).

Maximo: Ghosts To Glory is the first title to spring from the US-based Capcom Digital Studios and according to the company is a "tribute" rather than a sequel to the original platformer. The game again features a brave knight who after returning to his homeland, discovers that Achilles, a once-trusted member of the royal court, has grabbed power and begun a reign of terror. Maximo must save the Kingdom by rescuing four magical priestesses and prevent the beautiful Princess Sophia becoming the next Mrs Achilles.

Capcom's US producer has achieved a beautiful 3D cartoon adventure game that still captures the spirit (ahem) of *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*, with a smoothly animated hero in shining armour unleashing spectacular sword attacks against hordes of skeletons and other nightmarish apparitions. Maximo has access to a range of magic power-ups that give him invulnerability, a flaming sword, tougher shield and other neat tricks, but gamers should beware – one stray hit from an opponent when Maximo is low on health and his armour will break apart to leave him in only his shreddies, as with the original coin-op.

The game is an enjoyable romp to play, with an intuitive control system that allows Maximo to dash around the enticing fantasy environments, jumping on platforms, somersaulting over baddies, smashing gravestones for extra bonuses and collecting keys to open gates. Capcom want their latest potential smash to be as much fun as possible, imbuing it with the pick-up-and-play aesthetic of their other arcade-style hits such as the mad multiplayer beat-'em-up *Power Stone*. A real dark horse, Maximo came out of nowhere to storm the recent E3 games show in LA, impressing attendees with its obvious postmodern references to *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* combined with state-of-the-art graphics and a healthy dose of simple, addictive hack-'n'-slash gameplay. Expect ageing retro nuts and PS2 virgins alike to embrace the medieval ghostbusting thrills of *Maximo* when it arrives in shops this Christmas. ☐ **JS**

//Take one too many hits and Maximo will be forced to fight in his shreddies//



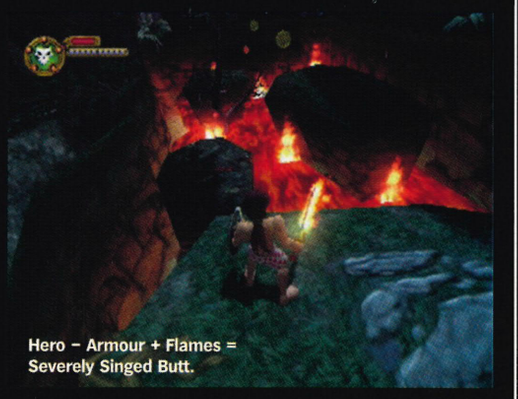
GHOSTS OF THE PAST

Capcom's spiritual coin-op heritage.

In the Eighties, Capcom launched a series of coin-ops that included the WWII shoot-'em-up *1942* and vertical-scrolling soldier sim *Commando*. However in 1985, the company launched *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* (known as *Makaimura* in Japan) a loony platformer that featured a brave cartoon knight desperately fighting against a procession of ghoulish adversaries including bats, demons and good ol' zombies. Players picked up weapons as they progressed, gaining access to various swords, daggers and lances that could be jabbed or thrown at enemies. An instant smash, the game spawned a graphically-refined sequel *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* as well as a home console remix. All three *G&G* games are currently available to buy and savour on a three-CD PSone compilation packed with other retro classics entitled *Capcom Generations*.

Maximo is reduced to fighting in his white-with-red-hearts boxers.

Magical power-ups add much needed pizazz to weapons.



Hero – Armour + Flames = Severely Singed Butt.

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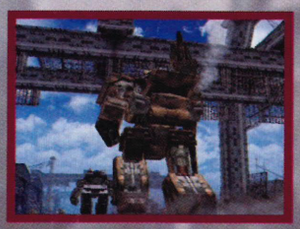

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SPY

Future perfect: *Exo*'s stunning New Hong Kong skyline (pre-devestation).

MECHS IN THE CITY

Robot wars of a deadlier kind in the futuristic *Exo*.

AS WE LUNGE HEADFIRST into the brave new world of the 21st Century, who knows what the next hundred years may bring? Colonies on Mars, perhaps? Terrible destruction through global warming? No. Apparently the future will be packed with humans in armoured exoskeletons smashing the bejeezus out of each other for pure entertainment. Well, it beats *Temptation Island* anyway.

Exo is an ambitious new PS2 title from Sheffield-based developer Particle Systems, previously responsible for such good-looking PC games as *Independence War* (aka *I-War*). Set in the techno sheen of New Hong Kong, it's now the year 2060 and computer AI is now so advanced that entire cities are controlled and managed by robots. As an entertaining sideline, the wealthy corporations that have built these metal marvels show off their latest creations on an ultraviolent TV show with battles between human competitors encased in robotic war suits. Unfortunately things go awry when a terrorist organisation takes US government officials hostage and dangerously subverts the city's robots, sending them spinning wildly out of control.

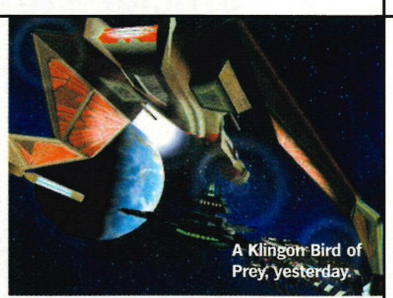
Players take control of a team of roboteer athletes led by security agent Yolanda Jackson, whose mission is to rescue the hostages, kill the terrorists and disable the robots who are taking over the metropolis in a nightmarish *Westworld*-type scenario. Through 16 narrative-led levels, gamers have to select their mission teams from a squad of distinct individuals, each possessing different skills. *Exo* includes three armour types; a two metre high suit with high manoeuvrability, a three metre exoskeleton with better fire power and a huge five metre beast – basically a walking tank. Particle Systems promises elements of stealth and all-out blasting as well as breathtaking views of New Hong Kong for the added future Far East experience. *Exo* is planned for release early in 2002. ☐ **JS**

BLUE LINES

The first 'proper' screenshots of Konami's *Age of Empires II* have been released (left). The superb RTS will be out later this year » Quirk alert! Developer Treasure's *Freak Out* features a heroine with a possessed scarf out to save her sister in an elastic world » Ubi Soft is to make PS2 games based on *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* » STOP PRESS! Namco have announced a new charcater for *Tekken 4* named Dean Earwicker. Paul Phoenix, Kazuya Mishima, Ling Xiaoyu, King, Hwoahang and Marshall Law will all reappear

SULU NATION

Star Trek: Shattered Universe beams onto PlayStation 2.



A Klingon Bird of Prey, yesterday.

TREKKIES WILL BE DROOLING into their reproduction phasers with the announcement of a new PS2 game starring the original galaxy-hopping Federation heroes. *Star Trek: Shattered Universe* is a 3D space shooter set in a dark alternative reality that was featured in the Sixties *Star Trek* series episode *Mirror, Mirror*, where Kirk and Spock battled evil alter egos of themselves.

The game takes place after the last movie to feature the original cast, *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, set when Captain Sulu has his own ship the USS Excelsior. Sulu and his crew are stranded in the alternate universe, where the Federation is evil and a host of alien races, including Klingons, Romulans and Vulcans want to turn them into charred space toast. Players take control of a former Federation shuttle pilot, who gets to belt around in a range of lethal fighters, blasting enemies and carrying out missions that will hopefully see the Excelsior back safely to its own universe.

"I'm personally a big fan of the original series, so we want to get as many elements from that as possible," says Andrew J Iverson, the Director of developer Starsphere Interactive. "This is the first *Star Trek* title where your mission involves going up against Federation ships and actually destroying them."

Aside from the action, *Star Trek: Shattered Universe* also promises gamers the chance to gain additional technology and fighters through strategic alliances with certain races or defeating enemy attacks. Although, Starsphere has an unproven track record, previously producing *You Don't Know Jack* quiz games for PSone, after playing it, *OPS2* reckons *Star Trek: Shattered Universe* could be a Trekkie rival to *Star Wars: Starfighter* when it docks with PS2 before Christmas. Meanwhile, the other PS2 Spock-fest, Majesco's first-person blaster *Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force*, is also on schedule for a Christmas release. Live long and prosper... ☐ **JS**

coin-op

With **Guy Woodward**, Editor of coin-op bible *AB Europe*.

THE NOLAN SYSTEMS

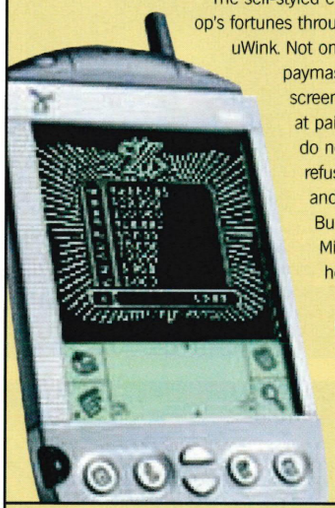
30 years on, Atari veteran Nolan Bushnell shows the way forward.

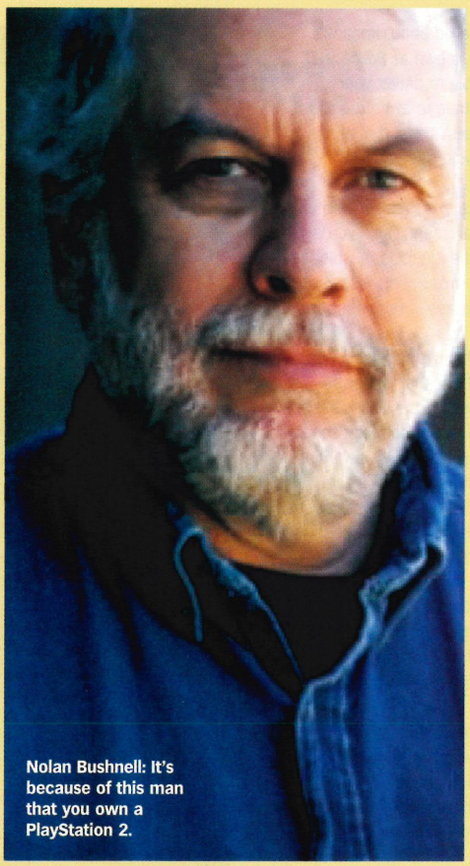
THE MAN SELF-CREDITED with giving rise to the videogame industry has been criticising the arcade market (most interestingly) claiming it is being mismanaged to the tune of $10 billion, and is currently only a third of its potential size.

"Most of the coin-ops we see today are awful," says Nolan Bushnell, inventor of *Pong*. "We can't expect to be a sophisticated business if we look like crap. And frankly, we do."

The self-styled evangelist has taken it upon himself to revive coin-op's fortunes through his touch-screen, multi-game kiosk venture, uWink. Not only that, but he's even willing to help former paymaster Midway out of a hole by taking its touch-screen line, TouchMaster, off its hands. Midway has been at pains to stress that severe cuts in its coin-op division do not herald a total withdrawal. However, the firm has refused to commit to any further coin-op videogames, and is believed to be open to offers for TouchMaster. Bushnell is first to divulge an interest, and although Midway has yet to respond, the bearded one claims he has all the funds in place to finance a deal.

As if that weren't enough, Bushnell is in the process of putting his games onto other formats, notably palm-tops via a licensing deal with entertainment software publisher BAM! entertainment. Players of BAM!-published PDA titles will (in the future) be able to upgrade their games directly from uWink coin-op terminals using the infrared link found on PDAs. ☐ **GW**

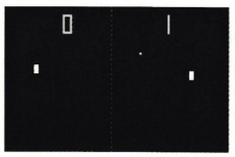




Nolan Bushnell: It's because of this man that you own a PlayStation 2.

lost classics

Games of arcade past.



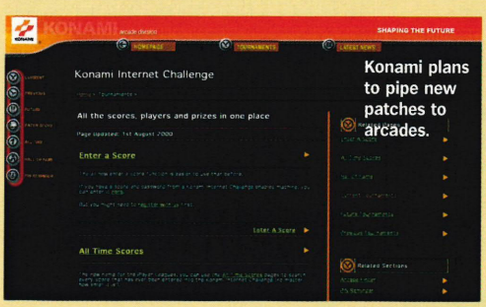
#09: PONG (1971)

In honour of Bushnell, what else could we drag from the vault other than the mother of all videogames, the cult classic *Pong*. Looking back, it's hard to believe that today's *Virtua Tennis* players were yesterday's *Pong* heads, the unexpurgated action of which consisted of frantic up and down button scrolling to bat a rapidly moving ball across an expansive black screen. Without it, we wouldn't be watching Sega's virtual Tim Henman strut his stuff today.

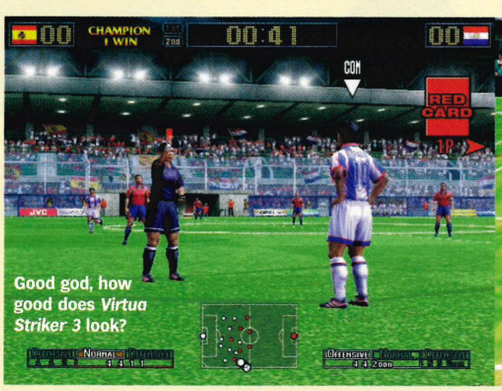
KONAMI WRAPPED UP IN THE NET

Arcade downloads one step closer.

Having blitzed the arcade world with its revolutionary motion sensor technology, Konami is continuing its drive to optimise conditions for arcade goers and operators. The firm is developing a machine management system to enable rapid troubleshooting, as well as ultimately to pipe content like game patches and competition programmes directly to machines. The company will also maintain a regular dialogue with arcades on how they can best market their games to customers based on information gleaned from visitors to its Web site, which will also house leaderboard stats for players, compiled via remote data capture.



Konami plans to pipe new patches to arcades.



Good god, how good does *Virtua Striker 3* look?

***Virtua Tennis*: soon to be superseded with an coin-op update.**

JUST DO IT... (NIRTUALLY)

Free from the shackles of hardware production, the new, lean and mean Sega gets sporty.

Battle with Sega's new *Virtua Fighter 4* down the high street.

Forget the Nike 10K, all you need for exercise this summer is to pop down your local arcade and try your hand at Sega's crop of new releases. *Virtua Golf*, *Virtua Striker 3*, *Virtua Tennis 2* and *Virtua Fighter 4* are all on their way to coin-op and the good news is that nearly all of them will appear on PlayStation 2. So what better way of impressing the wife/girlfriend/boss/dog than telling them you're off to spend a couple of hours playing tennis? With all the excitement, no-one need worry about the finer details, such as why you're not taking your gym kit. Best of all, look out for *Beach Bikers* set on the beach volleyball court, and said to feature amazingly realistic and detailed replication of female players...

SPY

POLICE, CAMERA, ACTION!

Konami announces USB camera and gun controller for *Police 24/7* and *Silent Scope 2*.

IN PREVIOUS ISSUES of *OPS2*, we've raved about Konami's excellent arcade game *Police 24/7* (also known as *Police 911*). Using supersonic rays, the machine is able to detect your movement as you physically duck and strafe to avoid the fire of Japanese gangsters. Great as it is, we thought that the strong physical component of the gameplay would rule out a PS2 conversion, but Konami has other ideas.

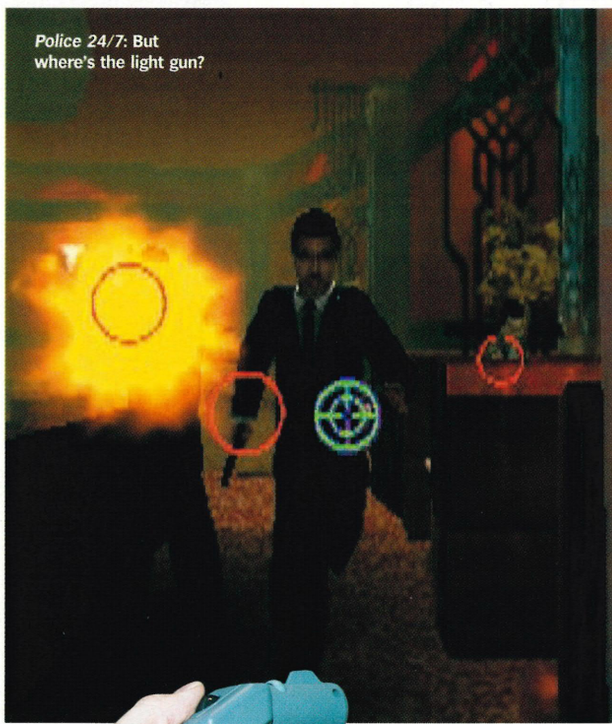
Shown in prototype form at E3, *Police 24/7* uses a Web cam plugged into the USB port to register movement. Once you've adjusted the head height level, it notes the direction in which you duck and cover, corresponding your movements with those of your on-screen cop. Only subtle movement is required but the system does work effectively.

Even stranger is the accompanying hand controller, a pistol-shaped controller featuring a trigger and trackball under the thumb. While your movement is controlled via the USB cam, the trackball controls your aim. This unusual setup requires serious co-ordination but mastery of the technique is deeply rewarding. If sanctioned by Konami, this hand controller will also be compatible with the forthcoming *Silent Scope 2: Dark Silhouette*.

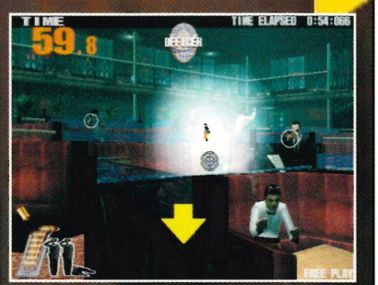
"Gamers wondered why there was no gun for PS2 *Silent Scope*," explains Hirotaka Ishikawa of KCET, the man behind these two arcade conversions. "We have the technology to make a sniper gun peripheral but it would be far too expensive for the consumer. We thought about a typical light gun for *Police 24/7* but because your hand is in the air all the time it becomes really stressful to hold. Our controller gives you the feeling of shooting a trigger without the stress."

Police 24/7 and *Silent Scope 2* share a rapid action aesthetic and a warped sense of humour that should appeal to arcade game fans everywhere. Both should be coming to PS2 before the year's end and – peripheralphobes worry not – both will also be compatible with the standard Dual Shock 2. ☐ **SR**

//Police 24/7 uses a USB Web cam to register your movement, which is then shown on the screen//



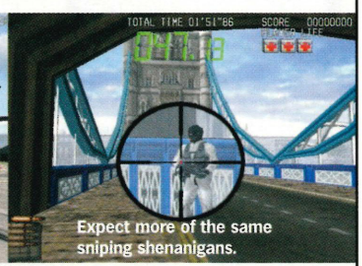
Police 24/7: But where's the light gun?



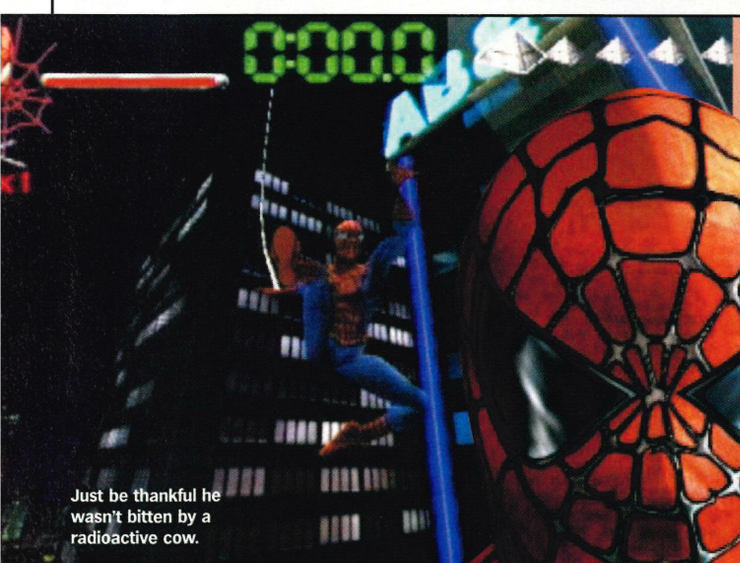
The more gangsters you shoot dead, the higher your ranking within the police force. God bless the LAPD.

The new controller – trackball and trigger.

Silent Scope 2 is another direct arcade port.



Expect more of the same sniping shenanigans.



Just be thankful he wasn't bitten by a radioactive cow.

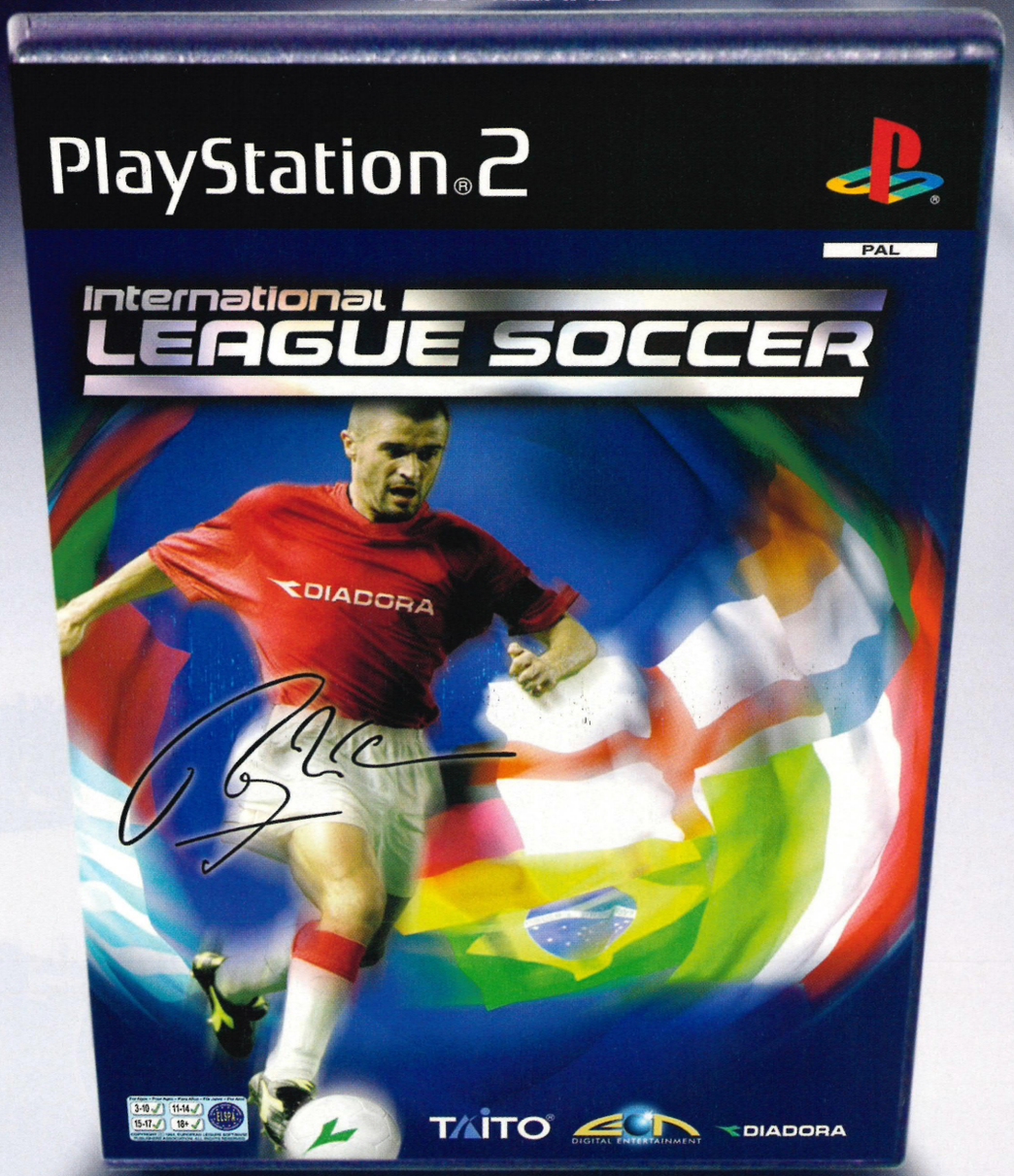
WEB OF INTRIGUE

Spider-Man The Movie is coming to PS2, and Spy senses a hit in the making.

GONE ARE THE days when movie tie-in games were just lazy coat tail riders, blowing their creative wads on high profile packaging and leaving the gamer deeply dissatisfied. Treyarch's upcoming PS2 *Spider-Man The Movie* game is a case in point. Not only has the developer been given the blockbuster-in-waiting's script by director Sam Raimi, but they've also had access to over 400 pieces of production material including on-set blueprints and costume design info. Wisely aping much of the control system from Neversoft's earlier PSone Spidey outing, the new game's plot will parallel the film's plot, pitting the webslinger against the Green Goblin plus such non-movie villains as the Vulture and the Shocker across a fog free New York skyline. Players' quick reactions will once again be enhanced by their alter ego's tingling 'spider-sense' and missions are due to include a breakneck voyage over the roof tops to destroy a series of time bombs. The film premieres late next spring with the game following hot on its heels, so there's still a way to go, but even now Spider-Man's looking good in his new, mesh threads and the quality of animation is already way in advance of his 32 bit exertions. More news as we get it. ☐ **PF**

“ International League Soccer
– in a league of its own ”

ROY KEANE



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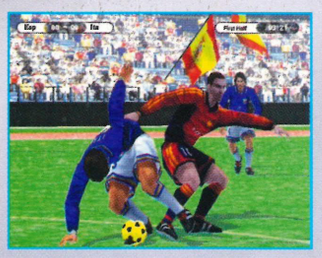

www.internationalleaguesoccer.com

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SPY

THE BEAUTIFUL

OPS2 continues its passionate search for the most amazing PlayStation 2 games never conceived. This month: The best tyre-squealing, Schumacher-baiting, gear-crunching Formula One game in the world.

1. The ideal Formula One game should have an extensive role-playing element like *The Sims*, so you can play the glamorous life of an F1 driver off-course too. Indulge in lengthy tanning sessions, gyrate around exclusive Monaco nightclubs in cripplingly expensive shades and grab yourself a beautiful model to be groomed as a trophy wife when you invite *Hello!* into your lovely Tuscan villa. We can but dream.

2. A choice of many different commentators including excitable knitwear legend Murray Walker, surrealist cross-dressing stand-up Eddie Izzard ("You never see roof racks on F1 cars, no…") staccato larynxed, psycho-thespian Christopher Walken and cartoon comedy guru Homer J Simpson excitably screeching about rabbits and butterflies playing at the side of the track having lost interest in the race after the first lap.

3. The ability to challenge players around the world to a race over the Internet. You'd also be able to download the latest stats including trackside grass length, celebrity ligger roster and instantly replay races that you've just watched on TV with the correct starting places on the grid and completely authentic weather conditions.

4. A bit of strategic spice is added to proceedings with a chance to psych drivers out by swearing like a navvy, 'mooning' them as you overtake, or having your support team hurl rotten vegetables and armchairs at their car as it enters the pits.

5. Amazingly detailed crashes for that extra lurid ambulance-chasing detail. Metal bends, tyres burst, explosions rip through engines and drivers are flung from their cars to smash headfirst into advertising hoardings – all in super slo-mo.

6. A 'weapons on' option to liven up the races and produce hilarious multiplayer battles. Witness Boadicea-style chariot knives on the wheels, unreliably fused homemade bombs fizzing around the track and the lightning 'shrinky dink' weapon from *Mario Kart*.

7. A collection of mini-games including 'Avoid The Marshal', 'AA Van Smash' and the thrilling dance mat action of 'Murray Walker's Bemani Challenge', where players have to match their button bashing to the commentator's increasingly erratic on-screen outbursts.

8. Special Formula One courses that feature exciting loop-the-loops, dangerous jumps, springboards, water traps and *SSX*-style short cuts. The sight of a certain German's Ferrari taking a jump badly and plummeting down a ravine would automatically trigger multiple replays.

9. Sub-game where drivers can challenge local boy racers for beer money. Opponent AI will be programmed with stereotyped national driving behaviour. Expect 'horn riding', ludicrous hand gestures and 'cruising races' where the winner is the driver who gets the most trackside honeys to flash their lady bumps.

10. Rather than just having a steering wheel accessory, players could strap themselves into a complex metal chassis that would add a whole new element of realism. The hydraulic motors in the contraption connected to the PS2's USB port would crush and crumple various parts of your body, depending on where you hit other cars and how bad your crash was. An Extreme mode setting will spin the chassis around 28 times before catching fire and propelling itself into your lounge wall at 257 mph. At the slightest provocation.

11. A wealth of special camera views to compliment the ubiquitous driver-cam to get you right into the F1 experience. These will include 'corporate-cam', 'spark plug-cam', 'Coulthard accountant-cam' and 'chequered flag-cam'.

12. Pit stops are made more entertaining with the addition of different celebrity teams such as Steps or the *Only Fools and Horses* Trotter family bumbling hopelessly around your F1 vehicle. Hilarity ensues as Del Boy is caught by Bernie Ecclestone flogging dodgy tyres while Uncle Albert repeatedly calls Rodney a "plonker" before dropping a spanner on his gammy foot. Look, everyone's done a sim so we thought we be a bit more imaginative…

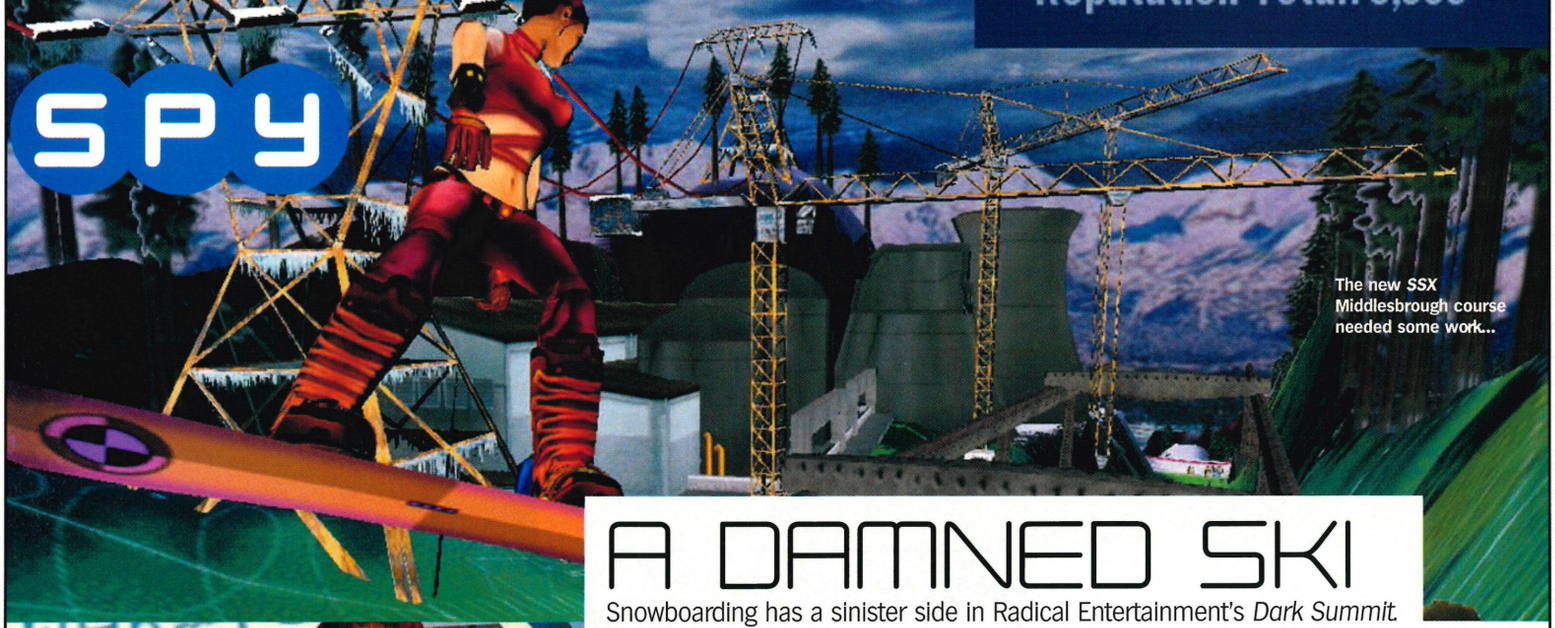
GAME

ILLUSTRATION: BEN KIRCHNER

PlayStation 2 RELEASE DATES

Game Name	Genre	Publisher
Third quarter 2001		
18 Wheeler	Arcade racer	Acclaim
Age of Empires II	RPG	Konami
Championship Motocross 2002	Racing sim	THQ
Commandos 2: Men Of Courage	Strategy	Eidos
Dark Cloud	RPG	SCEE
Deus Ex	First-person shooter	Eidos
Ephemeral Fantasia	RPG	Konami
Extreme-G 3	Arcade racer	Acclaim
Evil Twin	Adventure	Ubi Soft
F1 Championship Season 2001	Racing sim	EA
Freak Out	Platformer	Swing! Entert@inment
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Strategy	Interplay
G-Surfers	Arcade racer	TBA
Half-Life	First-person shooter	Sierra
Legion: Legend of Excalibur	Strategy	Midway
Madden NFL 2002	Sports sim	EA Sports
NHL 2002	Sports sim	EA Sports
Paris-Dakar Rally	Rally sim	Acclaim
Project Eden	Adventure	Eidos
Rune: Viking Warlord	Adventure	Take 2
Soul Reaver 2	Action/adventure	Eidos
Spy Hunter	Arcade racer	Midway
Supercar Street Challenge	Arcade racer	Activision
The Gift	Adventure	Cryo
Thunderhawk: Operation Phoenix	Chopper sim	Eidos
Titanium Angels	Shoot-'em-up	SCI
Twisted Metal: Black	Arcade racer	SCEE
UEFA Challenge	Football sim	Infogrames
WipEout Fusion	Arcade racer	SCEE
WTA Tour Tennis	Sports sim	Konami
Zombie Revenge	Adventure	Acclaim
Fourth quarter 2001		
Arctic Thunder	Arcade racer	Midway
Batman Vengeance	Action	Ubi Soft
Capcom Vs SNK 2	Beat-'em-up	Capcom
Conflict: Desert Storm	Adventure	SCI
Conflict Zone	Strategy	Ubi Soft
Endgame	Adventure	Empire
FIFA 2002	Football sim	EA Sports
Grandia II	RPG	Ubi Soft
Grand Theft Auto 3	Action	Take 2/Rockstar
Herdy Gerdy	Herding game	Eidos
Hidden and Dangerous 2	Adventure	Take 2
ISS Pro Evolution 2	Football sim	Konami
James Bond 007 Agent Under Fire	Adventure	EA
Jurassic Park: Survivor	Action	Universal
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Surfing sim	Activision
Kessen II	Strategy	TBC
Klonoa 2	Platformer	SCEE
Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2	Adventure	Eidos
Legion: Legend of Excalibur	Strategy	Midway
Maximo: Ghosts To Glory	Adventure	Capcom
Motor Mayhem	Racer/Shoot-'em-up	Infogrames
Police 24/7	Shoot-'em-up	Konami
Prisoner Of War	Strategy	Codemasters
Rayman M	Platformer	Ubi Soft
Rubu Tribe	Adventure	Interplay
Salt Lake 2002	Winter sports sim	Eidos
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Adventure	Acclaim
Silent Hill 2	Adventure	Konami
Smuggler's Run 2	Adventure/racer	Take 2
Space Channel 5	Dancing game	Sega
Spyro The Dragon 4	Platformer	Universal
The Weakest Link	TV tie-in	Activision
UEFA Champions League	Football sim	Take 2
VIP	Adventure	Ubi Soft
World Rally Championship 2001	Rally sim	SCEE
Release dates TBC		
Black & White	God sim	EA
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	Extreme sports sim	Acclaim
The Getaway	Adventure/racer	SCEE
Ghostmaster	Adventure	Empire
Final Fantasy X	RPG	Square
Ico	Adventure	SCEE
Legends Of Wrestling	Sports sim	Acclaim
Medal Of Honor Frontline	First-person shooter	EA
Medal Of Honor Fighter Command	Flight sim	EA
Metal Gear Solid 2	Adventure	Konami
Pirates Of Skull Cove	Action	EA
Spiderman: The Movie	Action/adventure	Activision
SOCOM: US Navy Seals	Combat sim	SCEE
Starsky and Hutch	Adventure/racer	Empire
Star Wars Racer Revenge II	Future racer	Activision
Tenchu 3	Adventure	Activision
Tomb Raider: Next Gen	Adventure	Eidos
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Extreme sports sim	Activision
World Sports Cars	Racing sim	Empire

**Game release dates are correct at the time of going to press.*



The new *SSX* Middlesbrough course needed some work...

A DAMNED SKI

Snowboarding has a sinister side in Radical Entertainment's *Dark Summit*.

Meet *Dark Summit*'s lovely lead character. Who need Moby?

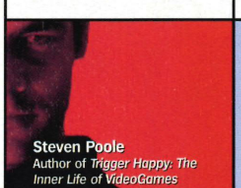
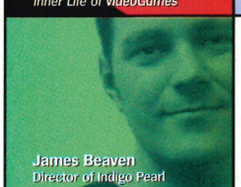
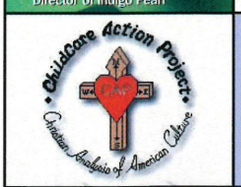
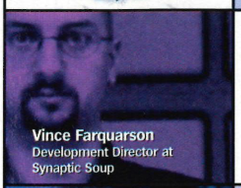
TAKE COVER – THERE'S an avalanche of snowboarding games currently threatening to engulf the PlayStation 2. With *Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder*, *Cool Boarders 2001* and *SSX Tricky* already announced, developer Radical Entertainment is ready to deliver a darker spin on the usual half-pipe high-jinks.

Dark Summit is a mission-based snowboarder where players have to discover the nasty secret behind the mysterious, non-Leeds United manager-related Chief O'Leary and the foreboding Mt Garrick. O'Leary has always prevented boarders getting access to certain areas of the mountain, but now the evil ranger has gone and closed the whole summit. Why? That's what you've got to find out. All the typical boarding moves are tucked away neatly, but to progress in the game, players have to complete tricky challenges on the game's twisting runs.

On viewing the title at the recent E3 games show in LA, *OPS2* reckons it's a snappy-looking cyberpunk/Goth version of *SSX*, with a lead female character and courses packed with obstacles to grind, jump, dodge and hit painfully with various parts of your character's anatomy. If you're an avid follower of the ways of the iffy stiffy, *Dark Summit* is definitely one game to look out for when it hits the slopes this Autumn through publisher THQ. ☐ **JS**

5x5

Every issue, we put five questions to five industry professionals.
This month: Videogame violence

	Are the parents of the Columbine massacre victims in the USA right to sue videogames companies for encouraging violence?	Has a videogame ever gone too far with its portrayal of violence?	Do you agree that some of the best games ever made (*Doom*, *MGS*, *GoldenEye*) benefited from an element of violence?	Do videogames companies have a responsibility to make sure that they don't glorify violence?	What's your favourite non-violent videogame?
 **Steven Poole** Author of *Trigger Happy: The Inner Life of VideoGames*	No, they'd do better lobbying for stricter gun control laws, or protesting against US foreign policy. As it is, games make a good scapegoat, so they think they might have a chance of winning.	Only when it's just been a bad game, such as *Carmageddon* for instance. Or, in the case of *Custer's Revenge* (ancient Atari 2600 'adult' game) when the game has actually required the player to simulate rape. But in an intelligent aesthetic context, no amount of violence is necessarily too much.	Absolutely. And in those games the element of violence wasn't just icing on the cake, but crucial to the psychological involvement of the gameplay.	Depends what you mean by "glorify". I think they have a responsibility to make better art, and violence without a compelling context is bad art.	I was going to say *Tetris*, but I've seen that game drive people to extremes of violent fury. So it had better be the relatively benign *Crazy Taxi*. **The revised and updated edition of Steven Poole's Trigger Happy is now out in paperback (Fourth Estate, £7.99)*
 **James Beaven** Director of Indigo Pearl	Nope. They're bad parents and they're trying to find someone else to blame. Imagine if you got drunk, got in the car to drive home, crashed and killed 15 kids then the next day decided to sue the brewery for supplying the beer to the pub where you drank. Stupid, stupid, stupid people.	Ohhhh yes, I've seen a few over the years. I think the most notable example would be a PSone game called *Slaughter And Mayhem*. It was never released.	Most definitely. In most videogame cases, though, I'd probably refer to it as 'realism' rather than violence.	That's a difficult distinction to make and depends on the outlook of the team making the game. Putting in gratuitous violence to compensate for the lack of gameplay, however, is something games publishers should, and in most cases do, watch very closely.	*Final Fantasy X* and *Gran Turismo 3*. The demo of *Final Fantasy X* is one of the highest quality games I've ever played, and *GT3* just flippin' rocks! **James Beaven is an industry veteran who has many a gun-related tale to tell about last year's E3*
	A right to sue is not something I can speak on. Although [US] law states entertainment is not a "product" per se, moral culpability cannot be absolved.	From what I have seen by glances at others playing them, yes. Such violence emboldens the aggressive traits that already exist in any player.	I am certain there are monetary benefits from presenting games that feed darkness in our heart, but morally, no.	Whether that is a legal responsibility, it is a moral responsibility to our children. Whether intentional, the entertainment industry has quite probably the strongest exofamilial influence on the planet.	*Asteroids* from many years ago. **Check out the Web site: www.capalert.com*
 **Vince Farquarson** Development Director at Synaptic Soup	The quick answer is no. The media in one form or another has always been a scapegoat for tragedies of this nature. In the early Eighties video nasties would have been blamed and before that, cinema and rock 'n' roll music. If you want to find the true cause of such acts look to the main commonalities over this larger time frame – people and weapons.	Probably not. If we use films as an example, what is a more responsible portrayal of violence – a sanitised, big box office action movie with little actual blood, or a film like *Reservoir Dogs* where an act of violence and its consequences are shown in graphic scenes that challenge the viewer to actually think about the horror inherent in such acts?	It's not so much the use of violence that should be the focus but more whether it's appropriate. If you're going to make a game about soldiers or spies aimed at adults, it is wholly appropriate that elements of violence would feature as a reflection of the realities of those roles. A game about bunny herding for pre-teens incorporating violence, however, is completely inappropriate.	Yes they do. Violence isn't some admirable lifestyle choice to be coveted but rather an unfortunate side effect of modern living. Reflecting reality is fine, glorifying the less pleasant parts of that reality for a fast buck with no thoughts of the consequences isn't.	*Zelda: Majora's Mask* is my current favourite game, non-violent or otherwise. **Synaptic Soup is currently developing* Crazy Car Championship
Dr Sara Gwenllian Jones Media Studies Lecturer	No. There is no convincing evidence to suggest that videogames directly inspire violent behaviour. Tragic events like the Columbine massacre occur primarily because of the easy availability of real weapons in America. The victims' parents would do better to campaign for a radical change in American policies on gun ownership.	Not to my knowledge. Violence in movies is often much more graphic and realistic than violence in videogames. However, I think there needs to be a decent ratings system that enables parents to prevent younger children from playing the more violent games.	Yes. Much of the fun in playing videogames comes from the fact that they allow us to vicariously experience risk and combat situations that most of us are careful to avoid in our real lives.	Yes, in some instances. A videogame that positioned the player as a sadist, a serial killer or a rapist would be stepping over an ethical line. Videogame violence is acceptable in a fast-moving adventure context, but there is a world of difference between enjoying combat and actually enjoying cruelty.	I really don't have one. I like a lot of games, films and TV programmes. Thing is all of them involve lots of extreme action, combat, and exploding things! *Check out www.cult-media.com/sgj.htm*

PlayStation®2

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WORDS: JAMIE SEFTON

RIVER DEEP, MOUNTAIN HIGH

If there's one athlete who's continually smashing through boundaries between various rip-snorting extreme sports, it's ice cool Shaun Palmer – the 32 year-old professional mountain biker, BMX rider, skier and snowboarder. *OPS2* caught up with the man in his native Lake Tahoe, USA for a chinwag about UEP Systems' new PS2 game, Cadillac tattoos and his fallback plan to become the world's greatest living fisherman...

We're here in Squaw Valley, USA for the in-game video shoot of *Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder*, a brand new PS2 title under Activision's recently-established O2 extreme sports label. As reported in last issue's *Tony Hawk's* feature, the game's being developed by UEP Systems (*Cool Boarders* on PSone/PS2) and promises a powdery mix of downhill racing and trick-based action with a control system that will immediately make sense to gamers used to playing Neversoft's skateboarding classic. Nursing badly bruised and aching areas of our tattered body, *OPS2* relaxed in front of a log fire for a bit of aprés-ski with Shaun, six-time X-Games gold medallist and now star of his own PS2 game.

You started boarding at an early age.
Yeah, I started when I was real young. Growing up in South Lake Tahoe with the long summers and mild winters – all year round you're doing something, either riding motorcycles or bicycles, skiing or snowboarding. It's kinda natural for me 'cos just from where I live I can do all these sports all the time.

You're reported as having a 'clean' lifestyle...
It's more about the sport, but that's life anyway. I use sports to get a natural high. Winning an important race that you really had to work hard at is a far better feeling than any drug, including alcohol, I believe.

Did you plan all along to be this successful and having your own videogame?
You know, when I was a little kid I played *Asteroids*. You put a coin in the machine and when you were playing, it was like, you actually looked up to that videogame. The kids these days do the same thing, they go to the stores and buy a game, they go apeshit over that! I want kids to play *Pro Snowboarder* and be excited – that's the whole point of making this game. Back in our day we just had our little arcade games – it's bizarre, I never thought that it would come to having my own videogame. With snowboarding, I just made a living at it as a kid, so I just kept following that path because it was a good life and it just evolved into doing all the sports.

How much involvement have you had in the game?
I've done motion capture, this video shoot and I've picked all the riders and all the areas that'll be in the game. I go over all the images just to make sure it's right. It's like everything I do in life, I want it to be the best. I want it to be quality.

Have you got a PS2?
Yeah, I got a PS2 when it was first out. I've got *Tony Hawk's 2* on PSone (of course) and I've just got *Moto GP*.

Have you got the *SSX* snowboarding game?
Nah. I've heard it's good, but mine's gonna be a lot better.

How did you invent your trademark moves, the Palm Air and One-Footed Air?
Palm Air is just a Backside Air, but I kinda added some style way back and people just called it a Palm Air. The One-Footed Air, I just tried that from doing a lot of skateboarding. They're both included in the game.

You have many Cadillac tattoos...
They're very personal. If you get a tattoo you wanna get something you're not gonna fall out of love with. Y'know, you see a guy get a tattoo of a girl then have to cross it out with a snake. They're on you for life, y'know? I'll never fall out of love with Cadillacs. It's art on your body that'll never get lost or stolen or broken, it's perfect art. My favourite tattoo is the hubcap on my elbow. if you lose one on the road, I've a spare.

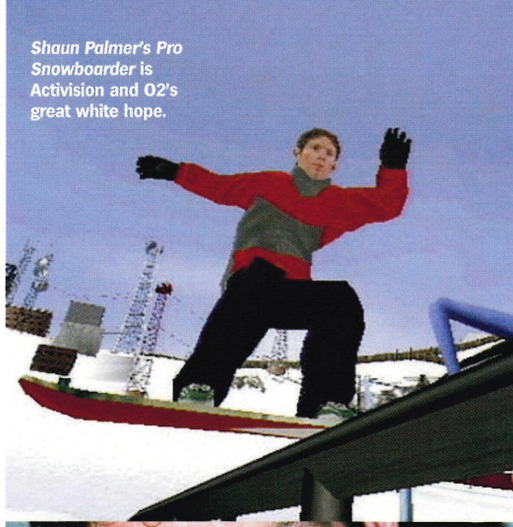
What's been your greatest sporting moment so far?
Making the main event in 125 MotorCross, because it was so hard. Snowboarding kinda comes naturally 'cos I've done it for so long. But that was the biggest feat so far. It's so tough.

Where will you be in 10 years time? Will you keep going as long as you can?
I'm gonna compete as long as I can win. Then after that, I'll try to figure out life without competition. It's the toughest thing for athletes, there are all kinds of problems associated with that. I think I can deal with that. It'll be good to retire one day. I've done a lot of different things in my life – being number one and having to be the best every weekend brings pressure.

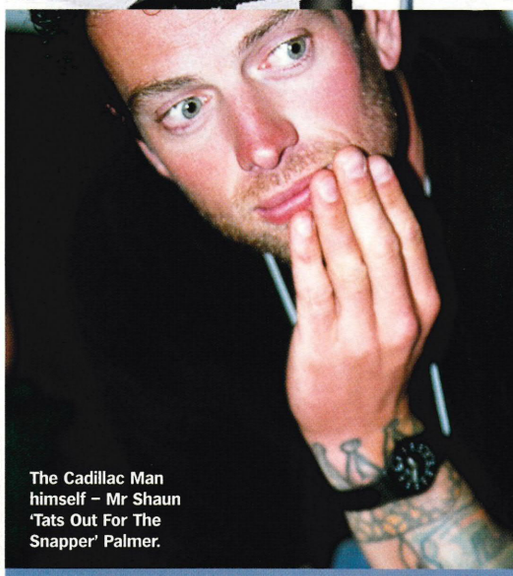
Hobbies?
Fishing. I love fishing.

You could go and be the number one fisherman then, when you retire...
That's probably what I'll try to do. I always take these hobbies up, turn good at it and try to conquer everybody. □

Check out Shaun's snowboards at* ***www.palmerusa.com*



***Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder* is Activision and O2's great white hope.**



The Cadillac Man himself – Mr Shaun 'Tats Out For The Snapper' Palmer.

PHOTO: GAVIN ROBERTS

Check out the board – Palmer owns a factory in Austria that manufactures his own brand of exclusive snowboards.

//"Winning a race gives a better feeling than any drug including alcohol" Shaun Palmer//

Players can get enough air in the game to grind the actual cables holding the ski lifts. Ye gods!

WORDS: SAM RICHARDS

BLADES OF GLORY

The popularity of *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* hasn't gone unnoticed in the videogame world. Schedules are now littered with similarly-themed extreme sports efforts, but the one PS2 game that actually looks like moving the genre forward is Criterion's latest, the outstanding *AirBlade*. It's easier to ollie when you're already floating a foot above the ground...

Now, did you ever see Marty McFly do *this*?

People are wearing a lot of Gore-Tex. The Eighties revival is rife. Waiters are automated, household appliances operate by voice recognition and people communicate via vidcon (or webcam, if you like). It's a vision of the year 2015 as depicted in *Back To The Future II* and it's actually not so far removed from life in 2001. Robert Zemeckis and co even hedged their bets by predicting longevity for the fax machine, failing to foresee the advent of email and mobile phones. As yet, though, no-one in the real world has got around to inventing hoverboards.

Until now. Enter Guildford's Criterion Studios and their stunning PlayStation 2 title *AirBlade*. According to the game's back story, such gravity defying devices as ridden by Marty and Griff in 2015 are already in development at secret laboratories owned by mega-corporations – they're just too dangerous to release to the public right now. Luckily, a renegade inventor named Oscar Renton has spirited one such hoverboard – the titular airblade – away from the clutches of his sinister employer in order that you can feel what it's like to ride a skateboard without wheels.

Criterion has tackled the issue of hoverboards before. A racing game named *TrickStyle* received rave reviews at Dreamcast's launch, but the critical acclaim didn't translate into sales. Although Criterion decided to persevere with the inviting idea of hoverboards in games, a return to the drawing board was deemed necessary in order to craft the perfect AirBlade. It seems the scenes of one Marty McFly just couldn't be ignored.

"Comics and cartoons are full of hovering skateboards and similar devices but *Back To The Future II* is by far the best known example," concedes Criterion's Creative Manager, Paul Glancey. "Purely because of that film, people are going to have an idea in their heads of how a hoverboard should look and feel. Even if you're giving people a piece of fantasy technology to play with, you have to work within their expectations of how it might behave. We had lots of meetings which involved playing about with an Action Man on a skateboard and making 'Neeeeeoooow' noises."

While *TrickStyle*'s board conformed to more of a surf model, the airblade is very much a skateboard in shape and form. This does confirm unavoidable similarities between Criterion's new game and the *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* series, but while Glancey is happy to encourage such comparisons, he's also quick to point out the advantages of his team's creation.

"Hoverboards offer more potential, more variation and more excitement to the skate genre. The airblade has the instant appeal of a fantasy object that reaches beyond traditional skate fans. It's easier to ride than a normal skateboard because it never touches the ground – stairs become a ramp instead of an obstacle – and the stunts you can pull are more outrageous. The idea of doing grinds with the airblade provided us with a dilemma but we decided as long they felt natural to pull off, grinds were good."

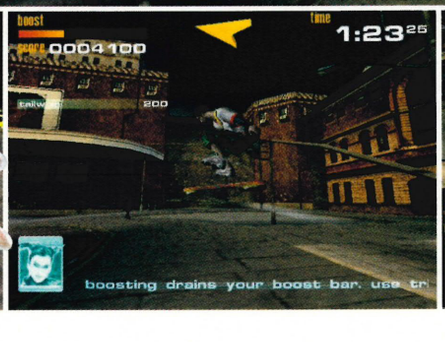
BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY

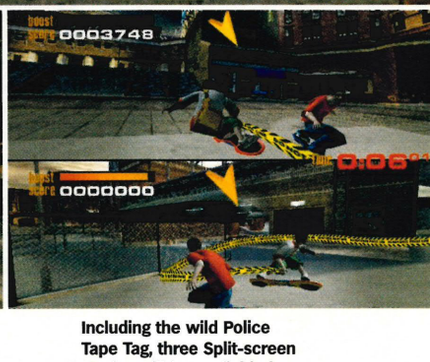
Again, in contrast to *TrickStyle* and in keeping with *Tony Hawk's*, *AirBlade's* world is a contemporary one.

"It's a bit of a *Strange Days* scenario," Glancey continues. "Everything is normal apart from this one thing. Being in control of the airblade is what makes you special in the world."

The existence of the futuristic piece of kit is explained by a smart storyline which runs throughout the game. *AirBlade's* levels aren't there just

In *Tony Hawk's*, you merely grab the board for a trick. In *AirBlade* you grab a lampost or a railing and start your combo from there.





Including the wild Police Tape Tag, three Split-screen modes will be available in the final game.

Courier satchel? Check. Mobile? Check. Three-quarter length trousers? Check. Thank you, you're now ready to ride the airblade.

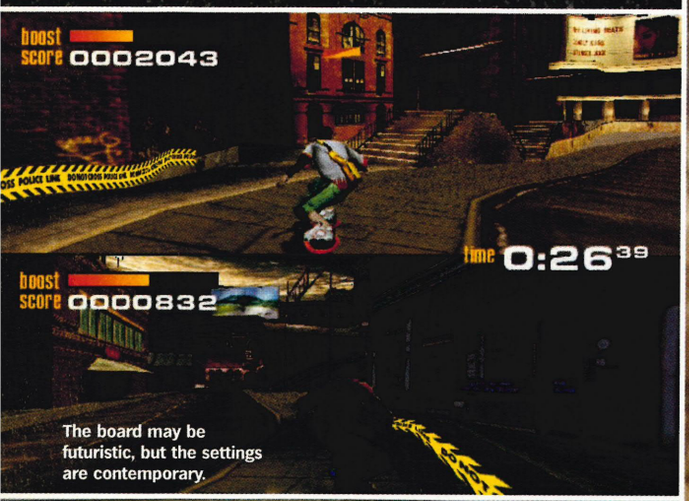
to be completed for completion's sake, instead, they form part of a propulsive adventure game.

The airblade itself is the brainchild of maverick inventor Oscar Renton working under the auspices of a company called GCP. However, GCP's intentions are dubious – despite developing such potentially earth-saving devices as everlasting lightbulbs, the company keeps all such innovations strictly confidential in order to maintain its other vested interests in more traditional forms of power provision. If the blueprint to a technology as revolutionary as the anti-gravity engine used to power the airblade was released, it would change the transport system forever, decimating the oil industry in which GCP is also a major player. Thus *AirBlade*'s central premise plays cleverly on an oft-quoted conspiracy theory – that the answers to major world problems actually exist within a technology lab somewhere and yet are being suppressed by the 'powers that be' in order that maximum profit can be squeezed from the status quo. Catchy one isn't it?

//"We had meetings with an Action Man on a skateboard, making 'neeoow' noises" Paul Glancey, Criterion//

Oscar Renton himself is something of a renegade character and after realising that his life's work is likely to be suppressed by GCP, he decides to make a break for it, airblade prototype in hand. Handily, Oscar shares a flat with anarchist computer hacker Kat and cool skate courier dude Ethan. Oscar is inevitably captured by GCP goons, but the airblade falls into the hands of Ethan who becomes the reluctant hero of the hour. With Kat texting updates via his mobile phone, Ethan sets

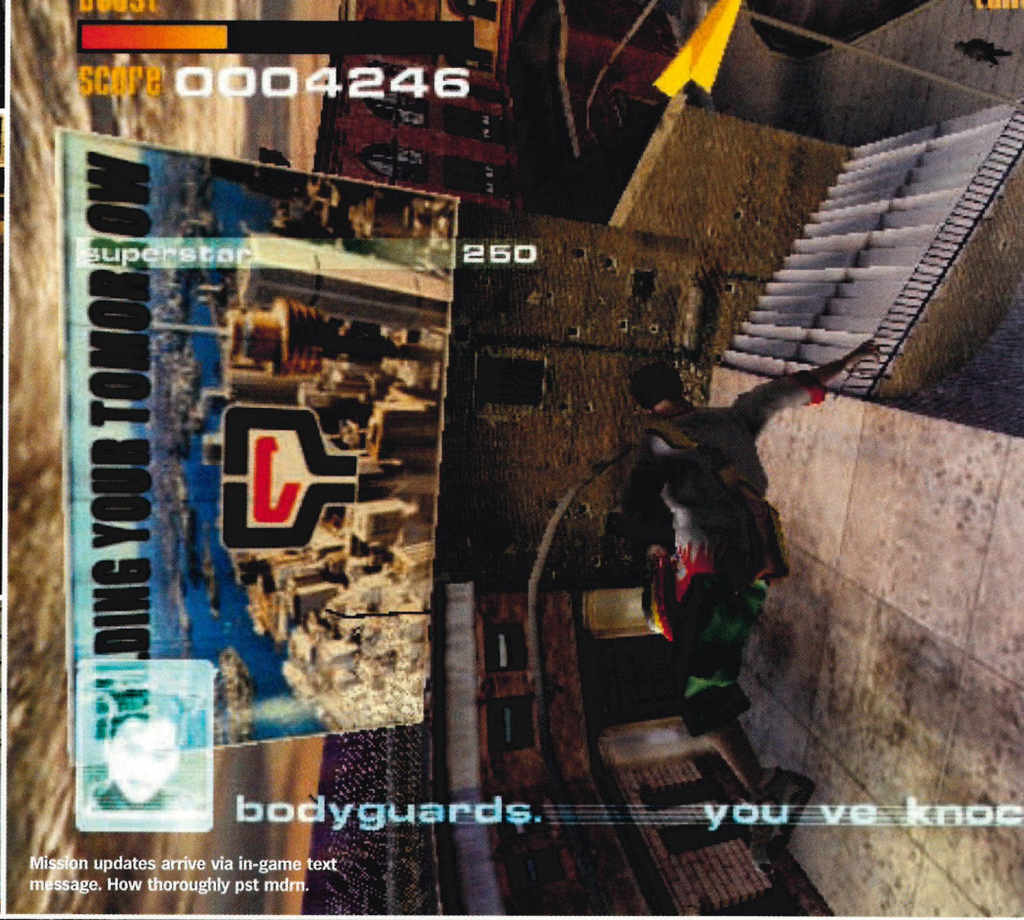
AIRBLADE



The board may be futuristic, but the settings are contemporary.

AirBlade architects (left to right): James Smith, Producer; Craig Sullivan, Game Designer; Alex Ward, Creative Manager; Paul Glancey, Creative Manager.

PHOTO: GAVIN ROBERTS



Mission updates arrive via in-game text message. How thoroughly pst mdrn.

ALL ABOARD

Fantasy boarding games are everywhere right now, contributing to one of gaming's boom genres. After all, why spend hours trying to pull the perfect triple mid-air spin when you can grind on the chopper blades of a parked helicopter while cute J-pop booms from a nearby ghettoblaster, hmm?

TRICKSTYLE
(Criterion/Acclaim, Dreamcast)
The first hoverboarding effort from *AirBlade*'s creators, this is a multiplayer dash through the concrete and chrome of a futuristic cityscape with speed power-up rewards for stylish surfing.

SNOWBOARD KIDS 2
(Atlus, N64)
It's *Mario Kart* on the slopes as crazed kiddies chase dinosaurs and turn each other into icicles or snowmen with the range of outrageous power-ups on offer. Exciting violence-fuelled fun it is too.

off on the airblade to rescue Oscar. Naturally, his journey also begins to reveal the massive extent of GCP's cover-up operation.

"You begin in the street levels and then progress into GCP's factories, offices and installations, culminating in a confrontation with GCP's shady Mr Big, JJ Sawyer," Glancey elaborates. "There's definitely an anti-establishment theme going on throughout and you do get the opportunity to smash up a lot of stuff."

// "It's anti-establishment – you do get the chance to smash up a lot of stuff" Paul Glancey, Criterion //

THE SECRET OF OUR SUCCESS

The adventuring element is the aspect that most differentiates *AirBlade* from other extreme sports titles. Yes, you get to skate freely around arenas and you progress by fulfilling certain objectives – both traits shared by *Tony Hawk's* – but completion criteria in *AirBlade* all affects the story.

"This was a conundrum for us," Glancey admits. "We couldn't just have Ethan racking up a high score or performing a long grind in order to complete the level – those are abstract objectives that would have no bearing on a story." At the heart of the adventure is an scenario that pits you against all the might of a mega corporation and its secret police. But first, you must frustrate GCP's plans to capture the airblade. This means destroying 'wanted' billboards, disabling security cameras, forcing surveillance vans to crash and injuring plain clothes GCP agents roaming the streets. All this can be done with a few well-timed sweeps of your board.

"By doing tricks with the airblade, you excite the anti-gravity field making the board indestructible," explains Glancey. "This allows you to smash mechanical objects or break through barriers."

A non-linear level design means it is possible and mostly preferable to tackle the objectives in any order which seems logical. However, events will change throughout the course of a level's duration (as you're kept informed by Kat via your mobile) so any adopted play strategy will have to be constantly adapted. Glancey elaborates:

"In one level a helicopter is searching for you, but once you've disabled all the ground agents and security cameras, the helicopter is called back to base. You get a text from Kat suggesting you should grab onto the helicopter before it leaves in order to catch a lift to the GCP security HQ. Suddenly it becomes a race against time to find a route up to the helipad. *AirBlade's* system implements an element of story structure but allows for a good degree of freedom too."

The story mode comprises six large levels. There's also a training level and a bonus level waiting to be unlocked at the end, totalling up to eight overall and all this in addition to the multitude of modes detailed below.

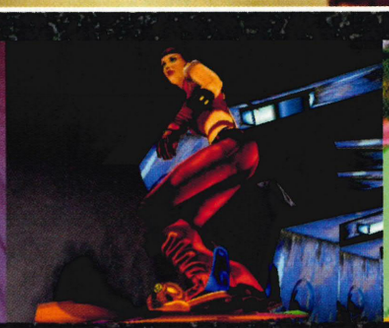
For the solo player, levels will be available in a traditional Score Attack mode where outrageous stunts and combos are crucial for racking up points. Success in Stunt Attack mode is dependent on fulfilling a number of more abstract criteria than in Story mode – a grind of a certain length, or the performing of a specific stunt in a specific location.

"On the second level there's a huge sign on the hotel roof – one of the objectives is to find a way up to the roof and leap through the 'o' in the hotel sign. The first time I saw one of the game designers perform this stunt with

Instead of Capture The Flag, you'll trail lines of police tape behind you which an opponent can intercept.

JET SET RADIO
(Smilebit/Sega, Dreamcast)
OK, there isn't a board involved, but this cel-shaded odyssey on inline skates does much to set the tone for *AirBlade* as your character rides rails on the run from the rozzers.

SSX
(EA Sports Big, PS2)
What's left to say about the finest PS2 game to date? It leaves dogmatic snowboard sims choking powder in an orgy of stunning stunt action and impossibly big air.



DARK SUMMIT
(Radical/THQ, forthcoming on PS2)
AirBlade's snowy equivalent, tacking a mission-based storyline to a trickboarding downhill stunt game. Cyberpunk stylings hail the creation of the Gnarly Goth .

YANYA KABALLISTA FEATURING GAWOO
(KOEI, forthcoming on PS2)
Potentially the maddest of the lot, a fingerboard set on the Dual Shock 2 lets you to pilot an on-screen skater whose mission is to rid the world of cutesy spooks via the power of rad tricks.

the whole city spread out below, it was a pretty amazing moment in *AirBlade*'s development," Glancey enthuses.

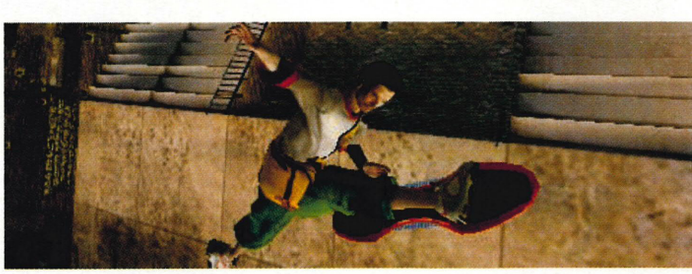
The two-way split-screen Multiplayer modes include a basic Score Attack challenge and a Ribbon Tag mode. "The latter is similar to Capture The Flag, in that two players begin at opposite ends of the level and race to pick up a roll of police tape. As you ride, you leave a trail of tape behind you. When your opponent rides through that trail at any point, he gains control of the tape. The player who stays in control of the tape for the longest time at the end of three minutes wins."

Alternatively, in Showoff mode, the aim is to out-perform your opponent in the fields of airtime, grind length and combo score on a constantly fluctuating bar chart. Finally, Party mode is simply a quick-play tournament for up to eight players to register the best score possible within a minute, the loser each round being eliminated. "I know I swore never to use this phrase, but it's ideal after-the-pub fare," says Glancey. "It's the kind of tournament players might set up themselves, but we've just made it easier by including it as an option in the game."

Taking a hint from the likes of *SSX*, Criterion is obviously aiming to offer maximum replay value with *AirBlade*. The levels are genuinely vast, and packed with secrets. The idea is to encourage experimentation so that ideal trick locations or short-cuts may be discovered by the inquisitive player. Story mode may not always offer the opportunity to explore the levels fully, but it should give the player plenty of ideas to try out when playing in Score Attack or Stunt Attack modes.

For Criterion, a combination of instant playability and endless depth is the holy grail. "In *AirBlade* it's fairly easy to pull a few good-looking tricks right from the off, but that means more advanced stunts are even more spectacular," Glancey concludes. "We feel it's important to give people a really good experience the first time they play the game so they're not fumbling around, bashing into walls and falling over. *AirBlade* is a really solid, intuitive boarding game, so hopefully the skate-heads will like it. It's bold, visually-impressive and immediate too, so it should appeal to everyone who plays videogames."

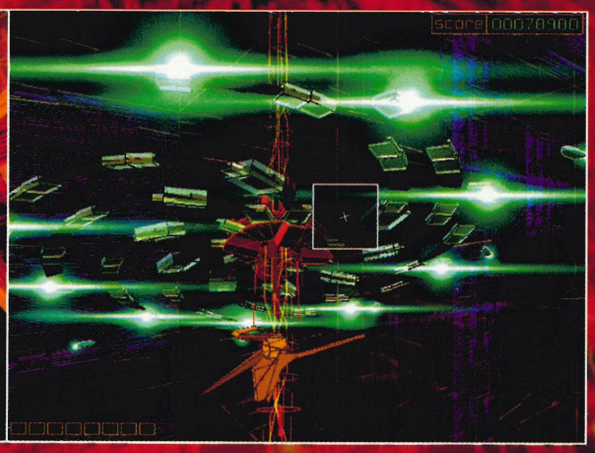
Indeed, *AirBlade* already boasts an air of confidence both in looks and feel that many PS2 games lack. The stylish urban environments and brazen breakbeat soundtrack suggest an extreme sports game par excellence, but the attention to detail of the Story mode objectives also incorporates the essence of primetime cartoon adventure gaming. The implementation of the airblade itself is a masterstroke, allowing you to pull outrageous airs and tricks off virtually any object in the environment. So, what about the future? Is the extreme sports king about to be toppled from his throne? Some may mock Criterion's attempt to go head-to-head with the *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* empire – both *AirBlade* and *THPS3* are slated for November releases, But this Guildford developer is quietly confident that no wheels are better than four. After all, where we're going, we don't need roads. □



Other skate games might let you airwalk, with *AirBlade* you're never on the ground.

K-PROJECT

Tron meets *Tempest* meets *The Matrix* meets PS2... The son et lumiere of Mizuguchi-san's *K-Project*.



WORDS/PHOTOGRAPHY: JASON BROOKES

SPECIAL K

The first fruits of Sega's leap onto PlayStation 2 are stranger than you could imagine. Listen with your eyes to *K-Project*...

Tetsuya Mizuguchi has always wanted to make PlayStation games. Strange perhaps, when you consider he's the visionary behind Sega's enormously successful flagship racer, *Sega Rally*. And stranger still when you consider his employer has a product lineage which engenders undying consumer loyalty. To be this good takes ages, after all.

But then, Mizuguchi-san isn't your typical company man. And, these days Sega is hardly your typical Japanese games company. The gaggle of independent developers who huddle cosily under Sega's umbrella are far removed from the corporate machinery of old. With their relaxed working environments, platform-agnostic development and 'big idea' spirited game development, such machinery has long been put out to scrap.

Mizuguchi's United Game Artists is one such company – its offices submerged in the *Blade Runner*-esque consumerism Mecca that is Shibuya – slap bang in the heart of Tokyo. In a previous corporate guise as Research & Development, UGA choreographed the cult Dreamcast dance-'em-up *Space Channel 5* – another Sega game already on its way to PS2 along with a piggybacking sequel later this year.

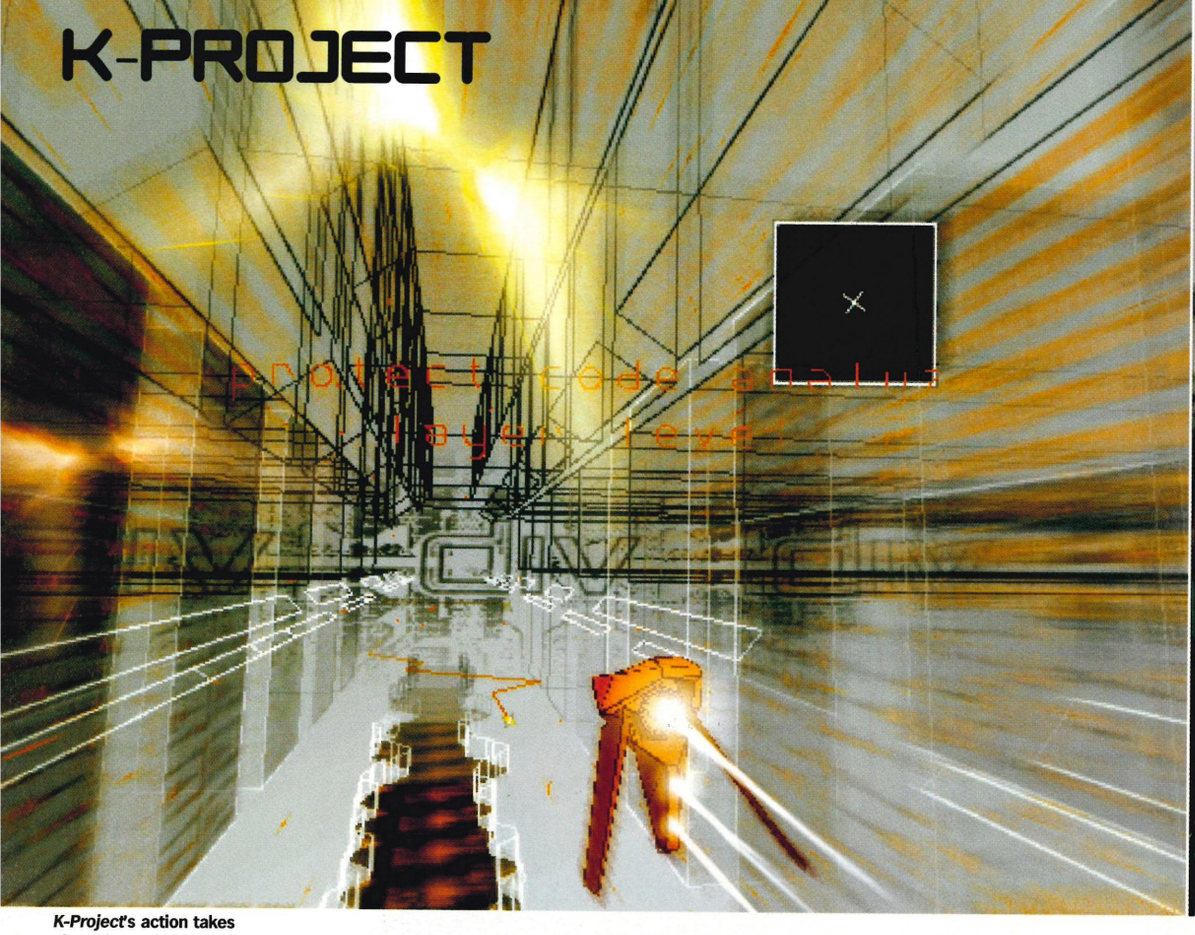
"I've wanted to work on this machine [PS2] for a while now," smiles Mizuguchi-san. "I like the style and I have a good feeling about it." In truth, his enthusiasm is borne more out of market demographics than the PS2's number-crunching prowess. And the bottom line is that the 36-year-old has made it clear he wants to make cool, stylish games which rule-challenge the play-it-safe industry economics. In short, cool, stylish games which sell.

//"I've wanted to work on PS2 for a while, I have a good feeling about it" *Sega Rally* creator Tetsuya Mizuguchi//

As the retro space funk of *Space Channel 5* tanked everywhere except Japan (where it notched-up 200,000 units), this isn't surprising. "The PS2's a good platform because many people of all ages will buy it," he qualifies. "So it's really attractive to me for this reason. In fact, I've been watching all of the hardware out there, including mobile phones, and the main reason we decided to work on PS2 is that the machine is already available, worldwide. It actually exists! Xbox and GameCube still aren't here yet."

Mizuguchi-san surrounds himself with like-minded creative souls – people such as Koji Morimoto (animation director on seminal manga epic *Akira*) and fellow game design visionary and *PaRappa* frontman Masaya Masuuri. So it's perhaps not surprising that his team's latest creation, *K-Project* has 'art' firmly in its sights. Bizarrely enough, the 'K' in the title alludes to the Russian abstract painter Kandinsky who became interested in the correlation between music and art and in particular, the synaesthesia (The subjective awareness of a sense other than the one that's being stimulated) of sound and colour.

K-PROJECT



K-Project's action takes place deep within a virus-riddled computer complete with firewalls as end of level bosses.

Mizuguchi-san being stalked by *Mortal Kombat* nutter Sub Zero, on the busy Shibuya streets.

So, what *has* all this to do with videogames? "Everything!" says Mizuguchi. "I was thinking about a new way of merging sound and visuals because this concept exists in a very deep place in me. Kandinsky's expression of ideas were done by drawing or painting on paper. However, we're lucky enough to have interactive visual and audio technology, and games will probably become the best media for realising this. Three years ago we couldn't attempt it, but now with next generation consoles, the time has come."

SERIAL THRILLER

Despite its heavyweight concept, the game is straightforward. It's a 3D space shooter with mind-warping visuals and music. Imagine PSone blaster *Star Blade* swimming in an abstract, digital timewarp reeking of *Tron* and *The Matrix* with a hefty dash of Designer's Republic visual flair. Add to that the jack-hammer heartbeat of Underworld's techno-thud for a very potent effect. During the game, music organically grows as you shoot various icons with each layer of MIDI-streamed percussion and melody building on top of the last. Chord samples linked to alien explosions burble over the top, linked to an endless miasma of visual flourishes creating an escalating orgy of beautiful, complex and futuristic psychedelia.

From dots to lines to polygons, eventually climaxing in delicious textured reality, Mizuguchi's own synaesthesia gradually builds throughout *K*'s seven levels. The player fights their way through a mainframe computer, albeit one that's infected by a particularly nasty virus compete with firewalls as end-of-level bosses. When stripped of its assets, it's essentially a fusion of *Tempest* (although Mizuguchi shrugs when asked if he's played Atari's classic) and the lock-on dynamics of the *Panzer Dragoon* series (*K*'s lead artist also masterminded the surreal magnificence of Sega's cult blaster).

//K's endless visual feast, climaxes in an escalating orgy of beautiful, complex and futuristic psychedelia//

However, like *Space Channel 5*, the emphasis in *K-Project* is on the moment – not where you're heading. Subtle gameplay embellishments like firepower lock-ons and sequential power-ups augment the basic single-button action and take the action closer to the holy grail of stoners everywhere – a Zen-attuned audio-visual synthesiser. Play in sync with the music and you'll not only be rewarded with swathes of gorgeous sounds and eye-popping visuals, but by high numbers, too. It's all about your score in the end.

Currently, *K-Project* stands at just over 50% complete. Although it did start development on the Dreamcast. "If we'd created this game for the PS2 originally, it would have taken a long, long time," its creator (Mizuguchi) concedes before lamenting the departure of Sega's last games system. "The DC is a really good environment to create games (on)" he adds, "although the technology is a few years old now."

But while the conversion works presses on, one of the most crucial aspects of *K-Project* still hangs in the balance, namely the licensed music and its integration into the action. What this amounts to is some tricky negotiation with the record labels behind the tracks (rumour has it that Underworld were keen when showed the game but their label didn't want their music to be messed around with). Despite this, Mizuguchi remains hopeful. "I went to London a few months ago to meet famous electronic music artists and lots of them are very excited by this synthesis of music and visuals," he enthused.

It's perhaps ironic that we end with *K-Project's* inspirational father figure Kandinsky and the fact that his fascination with a link between music and art lead to nothing. In his search to find a possible mathematical solution to the perfect painting, he gave up – perhaps realising that it was a puzzle that even his great mind, and his humble artistic tools, couldn't unravel. Over to you, Mizuguchi-san. □

SPACED OUT IN SHIBUYA

Sega's sexy sc-fi jiggle-em-up *Space Channel 5* is coming to PS2 with a sequel in time for Christmas.

A sequel to *Space Channel 5* (also on its way to the PS2) is United Game Artists' other big project. While only at a teething stage right now – just 30% – it's already looking several hops, jiggles and twirls beyond the funky Dreamcast original.

Space Channel 5 stars the undeniable talents of Ulala, a sultry space vixen who plays a kind of Pied Piper in space while leading an entourage of dancers through an alien-infested space station. It's pure Tokyo rhythm action, 'total entertainment' as Mizuguchi-san terms it. "Everything from the original is getting powered up," he explains. "And that means more dancing, more singing, more jokes, more funny acting and, of course, even more gorgeous visuals."

As for news of the sequel? The follow-up to *Space Channel 5* will boasts realtime backdrops, as opposed to pre-rendered ones, and will be 'adjusted' to suit European and US tastes, although don't expect anything too drastic. "I've had people in the US telling me that I should change the game to make it more of an action adventure like *Tomb Raider*..." Fortunately Mizuguchi-san isn't taking any prisoners: "That's not going to happen."

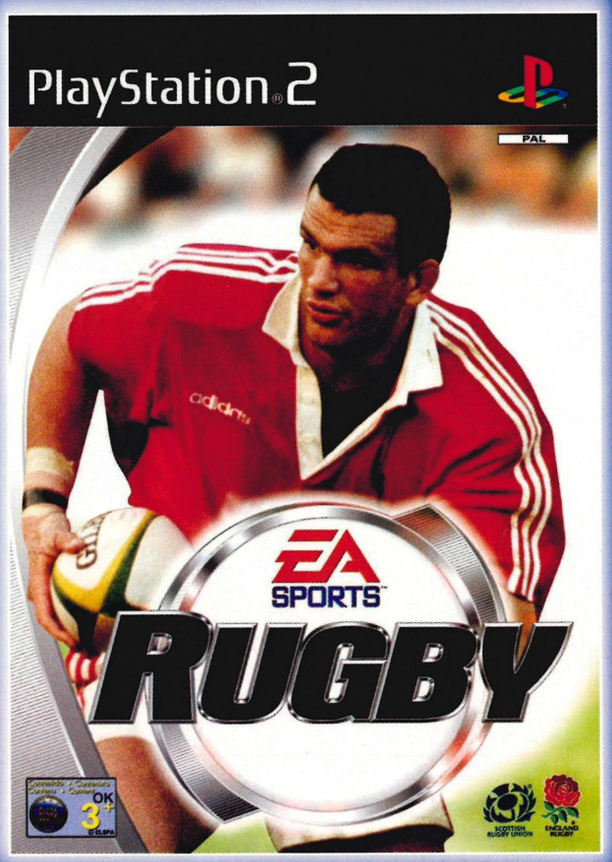
Space Channel 5 should surface before the end of the year with the sequel to follow shortly after. Don't touch that dial.

HMV

tackle this!

HMV exclusive

Buy EA Sports Rugby at HMV and receive a FREE EA Sports Rugby t-shirt*



EA Sports Rugby

EA Sports Rugby combines stunning graphics, sophisticated physics models and AI that immerses gamers into the big hitting and fast paced world of international rugby. You will have to become intimately familiar with your squad of players if you have hopes of winning the Six Nations, Tri-Nations Series or the World Championship. And with over 600 players in all, this will be no easy task! Featuring 23 accurate international stadia including Twickenham, Murrayfield and Ellis Park, along with expert phase by phase commentary from the voice of rugby, Bill McLaren.

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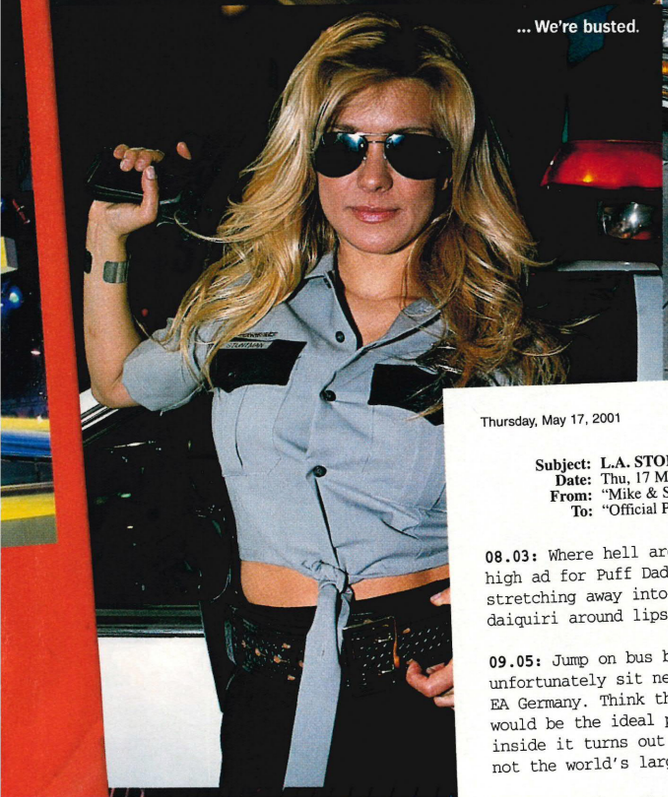
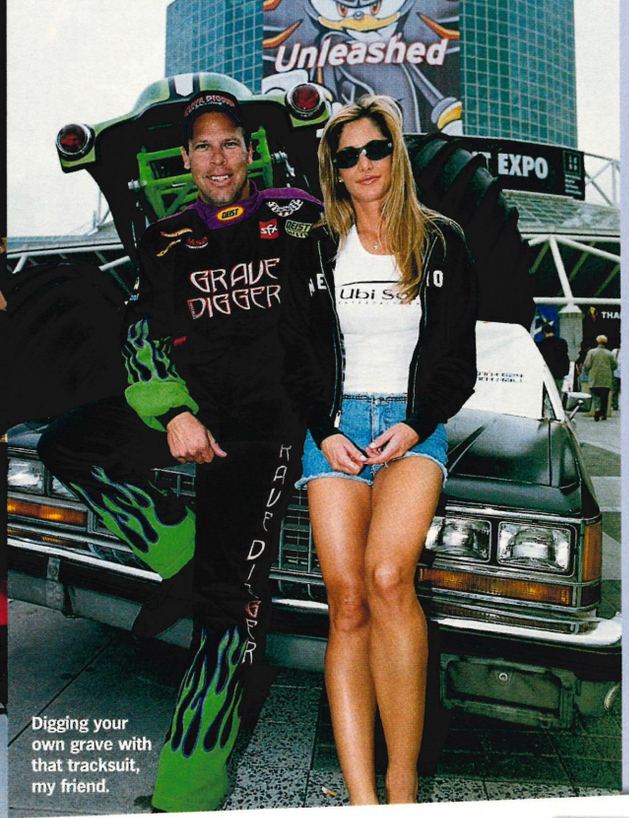
ECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO

Doh! The LAPD have spotted us sneaking out early...

... We're busted.



E3 can truly take it out of a man...



Digging your own grave with that tracksuit, my friend.

E3 AWARDS

TOP 10 GAMES OF THE SHOW

1. *Metal Gear Solid 2*
2. *AirBlade*
3. *Herdy Gerdy*
4. *Devil May Cry*
5. *Dead To Rights*
6. *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3*
7. *Maximo*
8. *SSX Tricky*
9. *Jak And Daxter*
10. *Stuntman*

FIVE GAMES THAT NEED JUST A BIT MORE TIME AT THE DRAWING BOARD

1. *Frogger: The Great Quest*
2. *Batman: Vengeance*
3. *Eve Of Extermination*
4. *The Mummy Returns*
5. *Metal Gear Solid 2 (Kidding! We're kidding! Jesus...)*

Thursday, May 17, 2001

Subject: L.A. STORY: DAY ONE
Date: Thu, 17 May 2001 23:42
From: "Mike & Sam" <mike&sam@e3.com>
To: "Official PlayStation 2 Magazine" <PS2@futurenet.co.uk>

08.03: Where hell are we? Peer through curtains at 40-foot high ad for Puff Daddy's clothing line over freeways stretching away into smog. Vague residue of strawberry daiquiri around lips confirms this must be Los Angeles.

09.05: Jump on bus bound for LA Convention Centre and unfortunately sit next to v. tedious man named Heinz from EA Germany. Think the huge Staples Center next door to E3 would be the ideal place to buy a notepad. Except once inside it turns out to be the home of the LA Lakers and not the world's largest stationery store. Run away.

10.04: And into the pit they descend. Five halls and too many meeting rooms hide thousands of publishers, developers and men from Albuquerque in salmon shirts flogging steam-driven 3D cummerbund peripherals. We'll leave that one for the PC crowd.

10.06: Barely inside the doors and we suffer an assault from a masked man waggling his sword. Oh, it's Zorro. Follow the sound of nuch whooping to discover Tony Hawk and Mat Hoffman pulling more tricks than a hard-up prossy on Activision's half-pipe. People cheer rightly.

11.48: Spot a thoroughly perplexing E3 phenomenon – what looks from a distance like a magic show (or riot) turns out to be two overly made-up 'booth babes' holding a screen in front of a man furiously changing shirts. Yes, weight-challenged American geekoids are actually queuing simply to swap their horrible XXXL T-shirts for even more horrible XXXL T-shirts advertising some shoddy third party joypad called Strike XI. This is a good thing – we can now see the beardy vermin coming...

12.45: Off to Capcom for a peek at *Devil May Cry*, *Maximo* (already attracting a deserved buzz) and behind-the-scenes footage of the new *Resident Evil* movie, *Ground Zero*. A gruesome affair but already, the E3 masses are beginning to resemble the zombies they're currently busy gawping at. Resolve to buy Uzi and herbs at earliest opportunity.

13.25: First sighting of babber-sporting men asleep on Midway's sofas. Leg it to interview Mr *Gran Turismo*, Kazanori Yamauchi. He likes our questions. Now very smug.

Square's *Magic Hearts* key – you know, it opens any door (officer).

Thursday, May 17, 201

Third Eye Blind? Two ears deaf, more like.

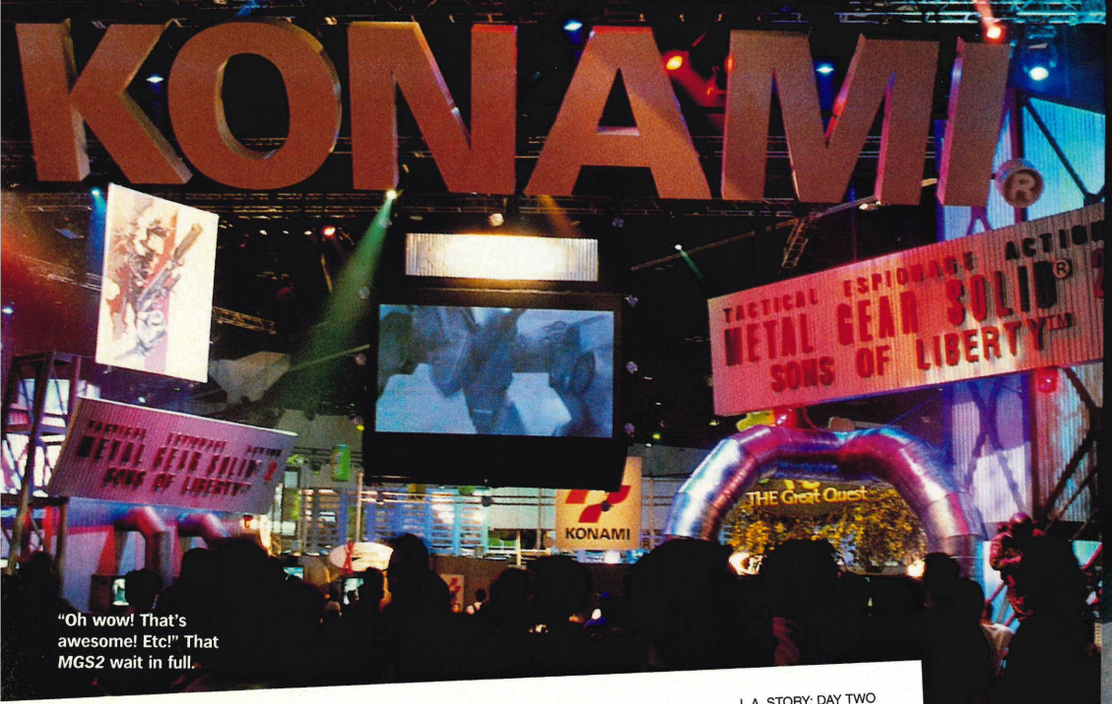
14.29: Make it with nanoseconds to spare for audience with Hideo Kojima, but he's not spilling beans on all this 'Solid's dead and there's three Snakes' business, no matter how stealthy our probing is.

16.03: Attempts to gain entry to Sega's press conference are blocked by three infuriatingly dithering Italian journos, like Roberto Benigni in triplicate, protesting their legitimacy with the use of an unwieldy TV camera.

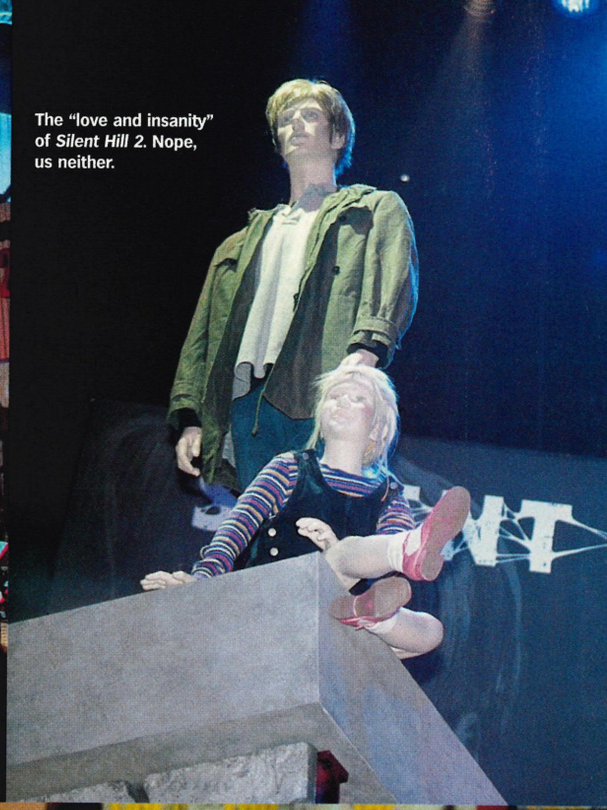
17.45: And there's Zorro again, dressing down for the day. He's taken off his mask and is playfully poking at passers-by with his blade. Nab a lift back to the hotel with Sony's towering Phil Harrison, but not before bumping into EA's top man Bing Gordon. Only in this industry could a man named Bing afford sunglasses that expensive. Meanwhile Phil has to make do with a posh town car – and we were expecting a stretch limo...

22.05: Tickets are blagged for Microsoft's Xbox party. Resolve to remain relatively sober but a mix of video footage of third-hand PC ports and the frat-boy bollocks of Third Eye Blind and Blink 182 sends us screaming to the bar. Oh, and they give away Pokémon-style collector's cards. Only 16 not to bother to collect! Sigh.

Zorro: masked gimp for hire!



"Oh wow! That's awesome! Etc!" That *MGS2* wait in full.



The "love and insanity" of *Silent Hill 2*. Nope, us neither.

Friday, May 18, 2001

Subject: L.A. STORY: DAY TWO
Date: Thu, 17 May 2001 23:42
From: "Mike & Sam" <mike&sam@e3.com>
To: "Send Help And Money" <PS2@futurenet.co.uk>

10.05: Paracetamol duly necked with a Gatorade chaser, it's back to 1985 with Virgin and its *Top Gun* and *Robocop* games. Run, before Stuart Maconie turns up talking about Quattro.

10.40: Hook up with top smudge Gav who's been chatting to pal Zorro. Not only does our favourite man in black look like a gay stripper, he actually is a gay stripper. Gav knows, because Gav has his business card. Trump Gav by collecting a card from Linda O'Neil of the dubiously-named Limelight Hosting. Tonight's going to be some party. Maybe.

11.06: After a blast on the bizarre *Police 24/7*, try to grab a chat with the creators - but who's taking up valuable space in the interview room if it's not our three Italian pals. Instead Akihiro Imamura of *Silent Hill 2* fame struggles manfully against the language barrier to tell us that his dirty game is a tale of "love and insanity".

11.25: Not much love but plenty of insanity on the concourse where a crew of men in bow ties look like they're about to break into song. Sprint to the next appointment and get knocked down by a catering cart doing about 10mph. Right in front of Gary Coleman too.

12.05: See Sega. *Virtua Fighter 4* is violently pretty, *K-Project* is seriously mental and we're tipped the wink about the online capabilities of Sega Sports titles on PS2. Other winks are tipped about two further PS2 games from Sega but we're sworn to secrecy.

13.14: Have a pop at the brilliant *Herdy Gerdy* over at Core, with the news that Lara's adventures for PS2 are progressing well up at Core's Derby HQ. E3 without Lara is a weird affair but lips are smacked in anticipation of next year. NEXT YEAR?! Shoot me now.

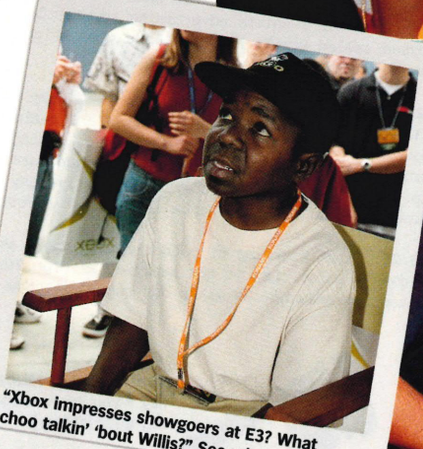
15.14: Behind those closed doors again with *Stuntman*, the movie-based automotive adventure from *Driver* developer Reflections. Martin Edmondson puts a star-spangled muscle car through its paces, and we leave extremely impressed with both the immense detail and the cool crashes. This, we agree, will be absolutely bloody massive.

19.03: Meet up with Rockstar supremo Sam Houser at his plush penthouse in the Chateau Marmont hotel. Gawp at the spot where John Belushi croaked. Gasp at the LA sunset. Talk about videogames for a bit and drink beer. Life is good.

21.58: It's the Sony party! Mercifully, a typically naff LA cab ride means we miss grunge also-rans Everclear (the gossip said Destiny's Child, nagdammit!) but make it in time for Martinis, retro gaming, shouting at mulletheads, dancing badly to West Coast hip-hop and swearing never to touch vodka cranberry again.

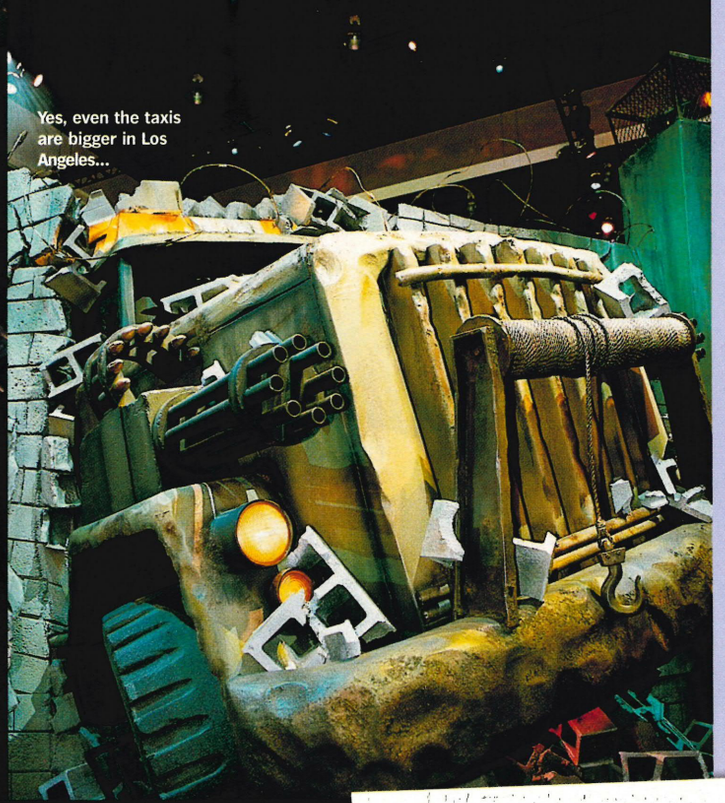
"Nice beard, Mr Roman Emporer Man. Now put 'that' down..."

Sony invites us to The Third Place – oh, alright, a film studio parking lot.



"Xbox impresses showgoers at E3? What choo talkin' 'bout Willis?" See what we did?

A chance to breathe free oxygen thanks to Activision. O2 – geddit? Suit yerself.



Yes, even the taxis are bigger in Los Angeles...

L.A. STORY

E3 AWARDS

TOP FIVE DARK HORSE GAMES OF THE SHOW

1. *WipEout Fusion*
2. *Shiny Red Car*
3. *SOCOM: US Navy Seals*
4. *Ico*
5. *Kingdom Hearts*

TOP 10 PRE-SONY PARTY RUMOURS

1. Destiny's Child are playing
2. Aerosmith are playing
3. Oasis are playing
4. The Black Crowes are playing
5. Christina Aguilera is playing
6. Britney Spears is playing
7. Blink 182 and Third Eye Blind are playing
8. Bachman Turner Overdrive are playing
9. Hideo Kojima is on the decks
10. Everclear are playing*

(*The only one that actually came true)

Sam and Mike take to dressing incognito for the last day of E3. Looking good, ladies!

Subject: L.A. STORY: THE LAST DAY
Date: Sat, 19 May 2001 23:42
From: "Mike & Sam" <mike&sam@e3.com>
To: "That's It, We're Coming Home" <PS2@futurenet.co.uk>

08.35: Discover that while wandering the streets last night, sometime *OPS2* contributor Joao Diniz-Sanches saw a gun pulled in a kerbside kerfuffle. Decide to spread rumour that Joao's been shot. Say sorry later.

10.32: The first incident of the phenomenon known as 'show rage' as two beardy Homers in Strike XI mu-mum block a gangway by staring vacantly up at a big screen showing footage from the *Diablo II* add-on pack. Really.

11.03: Sweet relief in free-Sprite-and-you-can-have-a-crafty-smoke nirvana that is Rockstar's stand. Free kagouls are nabbed and a look at *Max Payne* reveals a serious contender for one of the games of 2002.

11.50: Raid the Activision stand for food, but even better locate a stall where people are strapping on oxygen masks (?) and breathing in coloured vapours for a lark. Wonder if they have it in bromide flavour for the lovely people blocking our view of the *Spider-Man* trailer?

12.18: A date with Squaresoft's 'Advanced Perception Center' beckons – clamping on our 'Endocranial Sensor Devices' (or headphones to you and me) a brain-smelting preview of *Final Fantasy X*, *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* and the ace Square/Disney RPG *Kingdom Hearts* ensues, although the "riddle of human consciousness" remains unsolved.

13.35: Trapped in a small room with a crew of skateboarders (Tony Hawk), snowboarders (Shaun Palmer), surfers (Kelly Slater), BMXers (Mat Hoffman) and wakeboarders (Shaun Murray) representing Activision's extreme sports O2 brand. Feel initially overcome by the strong waft of rad but while the guys are indeed dudes in the truest sense of the word, none of them drops the word "gnarly" once. Thoroughly pleasant chaps.

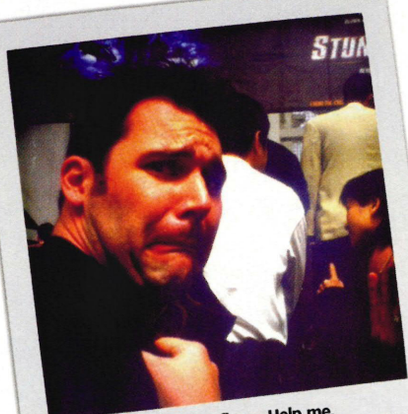
14.09: We are the only UK magazine to play *Time Crisis 2* with the new GunCon. We are happy. We are even happier when we learn we can spend half an hour popping caps in (polygonal) people's asses. Wonder why?

14.53: Back behind those mythical closed doors for a look at *FIFA 2002*, and it's all change. Weighted freepassing, overhauled AI, new animation... It's possibly the bravest move of the show - we'll be keeping tabs.

15.50: With time about to be called, a mad dash to see every last PS2 game ensues. And that elusive Atlus press disc is finally secured! Hmm.

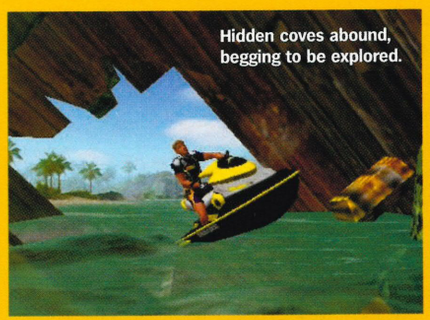
16.05: Free mini-baseball bats at Acclaim! Get in there! Now, can anyone think of a use for those?

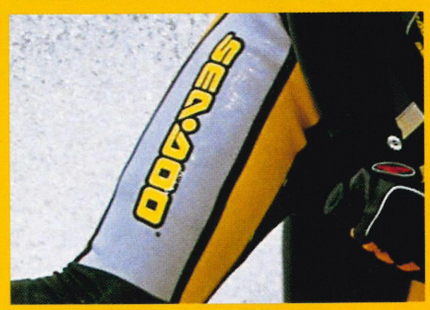
16.05: It's over. We know this because our last-minute interview with the bods behind *SSX Tricky* is cut short due to the electricity being switched off. Only a few gallons of Long Island Iced Tea and a date with a mechanical bull at the Rodeo Ranch await. E3? It's been real.

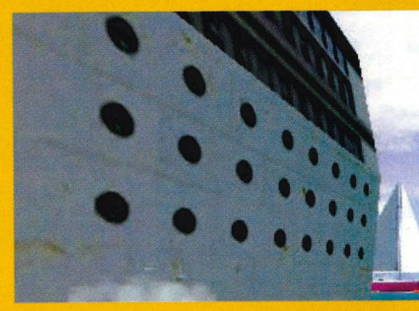


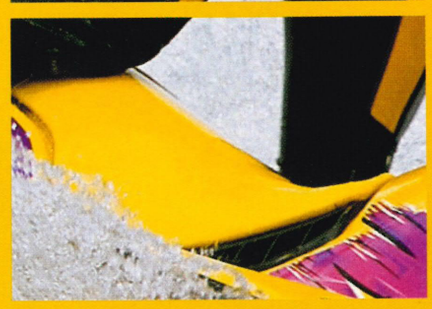
Looking good, feeling fine... Help me.

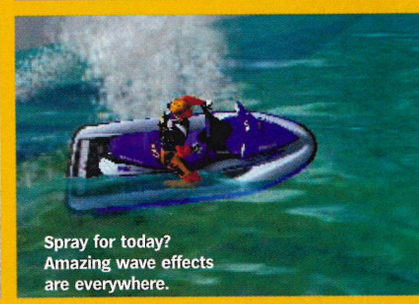
Welcome to a world's first – where the screenshot effects (of water, in *Splashdown*'s case) look better than the rendered artwork.


Hidden coves abound, begging to be explored.





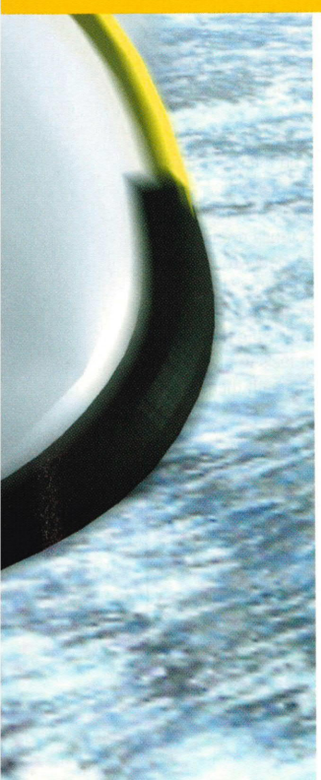



Spray for today? Amazing wave effects are everywhere.

WORDS: BEN LAWRENCE/PHOTOGRAPHY: ROB SCOTT

SPLASH TEAM RACING

OPS2 visited Rainbow Studios in sunny Arizona to play *Splashdown* – the best-looking water-based racing game out there. How could we have known we'd end up playing it for real...



Right then, you're told you've got to go and have a snoop around a development studio currently in the throws of piecing together one the most ambitious sports games on the PS2. You're told the game involves the use of Sea-Doos, a breed of machine not unlike Yamaha's Jet-Skis and Kawasaki's Wave Riders. Images of sunny beaches in the Med spring to mind, paradise playgrounds of the rich and famous inhabited by people with more money than sense. Wherever the event, it has to be somewhere surrounded by huge bodies of water, rippling invitingly. Somewhere wet. Damp would do. Moist, even.

So when the plane ticket arrived, why did it say 'Arizona'? You know, as in 'Arizona the desert'? We packed our Speedos and flip-flops regardless and set off for the scorched, arid plains of dehydrated wasteland that's one of America's driest states clinging to a drop of fatalistic optimism. Maybe these would be very small Sea-Doos with the ability to fit into a pint glass?

SLIPPERY WHEN WET

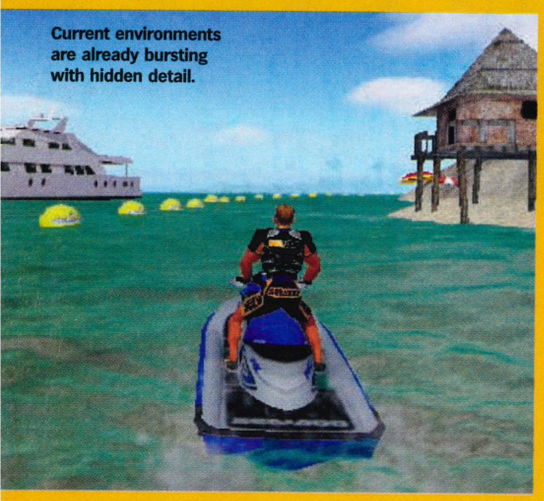
A name alien to the locals since it requires a fair amount of precipitation to cause such an event, Rainbow Studios is based in fiery Phoenix (the fifth largest city in the US) and has been for just over a decade. There, in offices that look like a deserted nuclear bunker, air con cools the industrious minds of nearly one hundred artists. Rainbow refers to them as artists because the company has one of the most artistic portfolios for a development studio we've every encountered, producing film and television animations, FMV and opening sequences for other companies and, more recently, an increasingly impressive games portfolio of which their latest is their in-development Sea-Doo sim, *Splashdown*.

To say *Splashdown* handles, even at this embryonic stage, like the real thing would be stupid if it weren't true. It hasn't even reached the classification of Alpha code yet, one of the earliest stages of software development. But sure enough, what Rainbow is working on looks and plays every bit as well as the real thing. Only a lot less soggily, of course. Getting the Sea-Doos to respond exactly as planned has been a fine balancing act and one of the most challenging aspects of bringing the game to life because their movement is so temperamental in reality. Manoeuvrability at speed isn't an issue, but the slower a Sea-Doo, the more difficult it is to drive. Almost as soon as you release the throttle, the steering becomes laboured and a few seconds later it's impossible to turn. This, as Scott Douglas, Vice-President explained, was something that needed addressing.

"We need to strike a balance between the player's ability to ride the Sea-Doo and our interpretation of the Sea-Doo's capabilities. If the game makes it difficult for the player to compete because of how we program it and not because of the individual's skills then we would have cause for concern," he explains. Achieving a level of realism while making the game an enjoyable and playable experience is being accomplished with a three pronged approach that Rainbow applies to every game it produces. Every game must be technological, artistic and fun – if one of the trinity is missing, then it's back to the drawing board. Rainbow is so committed to recreating the thrill of pulling off fountains, tail stands and pirouettes (three ridiculously hard stunts to the amateur rider) that they decided to 'tweak' advice from Sam

SPLASHDOWN

Acrobatics come as standard. Who needs *Tony Hawk's* anyway?



Current environments are already bursting with hidden detail.

Getting your zipper caught in the ignition is *not* recommended.

rainbow STUDIOS

UP ABOVE THE STREETS AND HOUSES

Rainbow's flying high...

After forming in 1985, Rainbow's first venture into videogames was nearly ten years ago with *Air Havoc Controller*, a PC game that put the player in the position of (you guessed it) an air-traffic controller whose only aim was to make planes collide in midair. Rainbow then went on to produce PC biker *Motocross Madness* and its 1998 sequel *MCM2*, from which *ATV Offroad Fury* and *Splashdown* take their influences. Other well-known PC titles include *Ravage DCX*, *Deadly Tide* and *The Hive*, while the developer is also working on *Star Wars Racer II Revenge* for LucasArts' PS2 portfolio.

Spade, (one of Sea-Doo's top test pilots and consultants) when he said the game was as realistic as he could have possibly imagined. In his eyes, 'realistic' means bloody hard and the more user friendly version now running as a 'result' of his remarks is way more approachable to novices of the sport.

BOBBING ALONG

The environments are just as important to Rainbow as the game physics and considerable effort has gone into perfecting them. Despite the clipping and unfinished textures (remember, this game is in its infancy), a huge playable demo of the first two levels was available and encompassed the gently lapping lagoons of the Caribbean and the tight, murky waterways of Venice. Each is already showing distinct character and will be accompanied by a further 16 levels dotted as far afield as the Florida Everglades, the Great Barrier Reef, the Arctic and the rice paddies of China. A few familiar programming traits are also coming through. Those of you who might have played an NTSC version of *ATV Offroad Fury (See a video preview of the game on this issue's disc – Disc Ed)* will have noticed the endless terrain that sprawls out from the racing track allowing the player to wander off at his own free will and explore the surrounding environment.

Splashdown has much the same course structure having taken some of its code from the ATV engine which in turn took its engine from award winning PC racer *Motocross Madness*. So, what's it like? Sea stretches out for miles with waves and weather constantly affecting the craft you're riding. However, instead of the perpetual lumps of land that didn't actually serve a purpose in *ATV*, the seas of *Splashdown* are pregnant with detail. You can travel for miles in any direction and reach sandbanks, explore unchartered, uninhabited islands, perform stunts in secluded bays and become a pioneer of new, undiscovered lands. The areas outside the racing boundary also act as a training ground ideal for perfecting those difficult to pull-off stunts. Practice makes perfect and you're going to need to practice a lot.

"There is a close correlation between tricks and racing performance," says Glenn O'Bannon, Lead Programmer at Rainbow and one of the first people to join the company when it was founded in 1985.

"*ATV Offroad Fury* gave the player the chance to pull off plenty of tricks but didn't offer any real reward. *Splashdown* gets the player to stunt to win speed boosts. A high racing position in later levels depends on being adept at pulling off all the different stunts you're given the chance to perform."

Another potential stumbling block when dealing with water is the course structure. You have to keep the racing surface flat. Water, as the disastrous PSone game *Wild Rapids* proved, looks plain stupid if it flows up hill. Even if it flows downhill, it has to eventually climb back up again to complete the circuit and unless the surrealist painter MC Escher knows something we don't, that's a physical impossibilty.

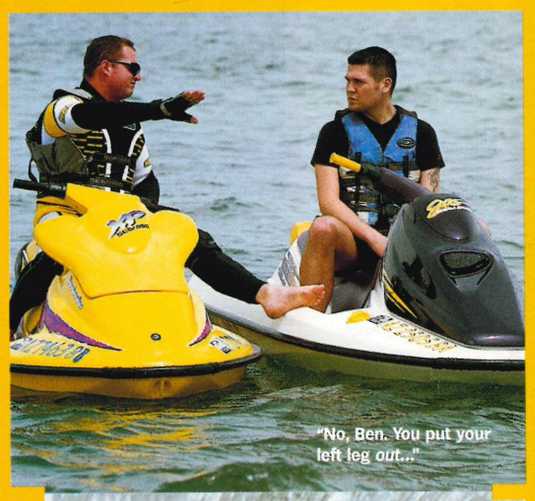
To compensate, Rainbow has an ingenious solution. The paddy fields are perhaps the best example of how it all works, because multi-level pools have been hidden throughout the levels in order to offer a better gradient for the race course. These are accessible to riders willing to speed up out of the water, across a roof top or embankment, then through thin air before splashing into the concealed pond beneath. More often than not, they act as a short-cut before leading the rider back down to the main stretch of water. There are plenty of these hidden on each course with a sprinkling of stunt ramps to pump-up the adrenaline just that little bit further.

A total of thirty stunts will accompany the final race. These have been categorized into four main groups; those that take place on the water, those performed under it, a range of aeronautic tricks and more acrobatic movements on the Sea-Doo such as sliding over the front of the machine and riding it with your legs. Infogrames producer Rafaël Curulla even divulged that they are currently trying to get a female Sea-Dooer to sit over the handlebars, legs akimbo and scream with ecstasy every time she hits a wave. Really. How likely it is that her move will make it to the final code is dubious. Almost as dubious as the next stage of our trip over the Rainbow.

Having played the demo to death and learned how it feels to dive six feet under the waves then shoot out triumphantly from beneath them in a

//Stunt ramps hidden on each course pump up the adrenaline just that little bit further//

Tim McKerscher risking life, limb and rubber underwear to pull off stunts for our very happy snapper.



"No, Ben. You put your left leg *out*..."

JET-SKI JUNKIE

The inside story from Sea-Doo's Pro Watercross Tour Champion (and stuntmaster) Mr Tim McKerscher. He made us do it!

In your professional opinion, how realistic is Rainbow's interpretation of a Sea-Doo?
Rainbow has done a great job. Modelling from a gaming perspective is about as good as we can get aesthetically. Physics and stunts are as close as we can get to the reality without getting our feet wet.

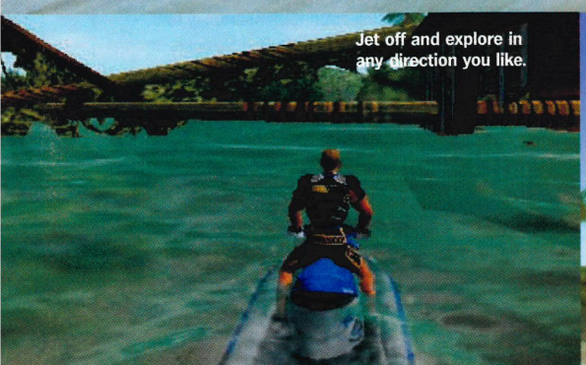
Is there anything you think has been a particular challenge for the guys at Rainbow?
The water effects from a riding physics perspective; including spray splash, wave, and water conditions. The one good thing is that you don't have to wear a wetsuit in your living room to enjoy the experience.

How much influence did you have in development, has it been a close partnership with Rainbow from the beginning?
Yes, it was a close partnership. They were as excited about the making of this game as we were. They respected our comments and suggestions, while teamwork has produced the great results you've seen and experienced.

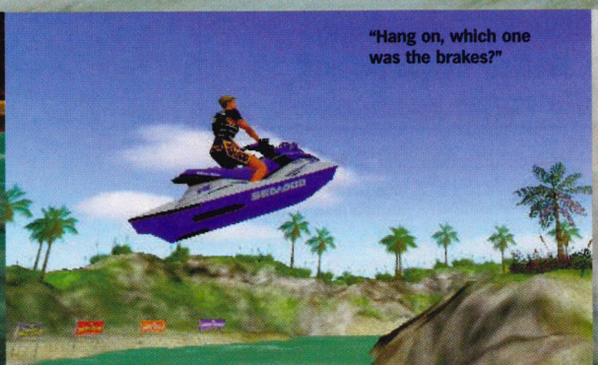
Are the many tricks in the game representative of real life ones? Is there the same learning curve?
Yes, they are. However, they have been slightly modified and exaggerated to give the game an arcade feel where riders are able to perform tricks which are possible only on smaller, lighter machines such as stand up vehicles. As for the learning curve, the rider movement and throttle control is essential to execute most tricks in this game. And that's another element that makes the game life-like.

Anything about the game which has surprised you?
The quality of graphics produced by PlayStation 2 are a huge evolution in the gaming industry. That in itself makes gaming incredibly real in this age.

Do you think the balance of arcade action and racing sim has done Sea-Doos justice?
Absolutely, the additions in the game are true to life. We sent our top professional test pilot, Sam Spade (yes, that is his real name and Spade has over 5000 hours of riding on his log) for riding physics development. His consultation gave the expected results. Spade believes there's a direct link between riding our craft and playing Rainbow's version of our game. Now I'll be able to ride when it's dark out.



Jet off and explore in any direction you like.



"Hang on, which one was the brakes?"

Come on now, admit it – that just *is* water...

OCEAN SPRAY

***OPS2* talks water, waves and wetsuits with *Splashdown's* development team.**

What aspect of the game are you most proud of?
[Jordan Itkowitz] The undeniable sense of fun. It's a combination of great control, gorgeous graphics, and the incredible technology at work. I guess I'd be hard pressed to isolate one facet of the game – there's so much that just shines.

[Doug McNabb] I'm proud of how the water renderer is developing. I've been programming for 20 years and I really enjoyed the opportunity of making it look as real as possible.

How hard was it to animate the water and what were the challenges you faced?
[Doug McNabb] The limited amount of CPU time I had to work with was, by far, the biggest challenge. Getting the PS2 to simulate the water surface on top of all the other assets it has to handle in the scene (terrain, physics, AI) was difficult – as simulating waves is memory intensive.

What aspects of programming did you find most difficult?
[Mark DeSimone] Well, on the PS2 nothing is simple. Once you understand it you can view the hardware as a box full of processors and approach problems in many novel ways.

[Doug McNabb] Initially, I would say the PS2 itself. When I first started programming for the PS2, I was frustrated. Now that I'm gaining familiarity with it, I'm much happier.

Describe the game in one sentence...
[Jordan Itkowitz] All the fun and exhilaration of being a hotshot, globetrotting Sea-Doo racer, without need of a wetsuit or a passport.

Was it easy to create Sea-Doos with different handling abilities?
[Jordan Itkowitz] The fact that there are two types of hull – flat-bottomed and rounded – already allows us to work a good deal of diversity into the handling of our crafts. Different characters and their Sea-Doos will offer a different range of experiences.

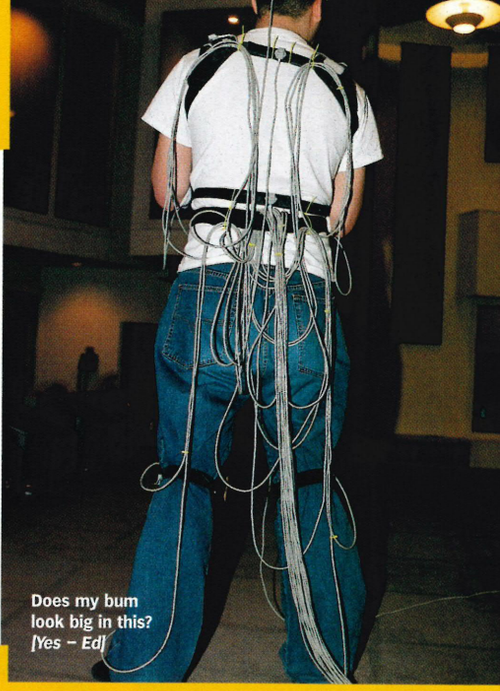
How close have Sea-Doo and Rainbow worked together on producing the game?
[Mark Mahler] Sea-Doo been great in helping us to make *Splashdown* as authentic and satisfying as possible. They've provided everything from wetsuit and hull designs to engine sounds and live handling demonstrations helping us create a uniquely exciting gaming experience.

Alright love, once more with feeling.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT...

Tapped and wired, motion-capture proves a potentially mortifying experience for our man Lawrence in Phoenix.

"Forcibly huckled to the motion capture stage, stinking trainers discarded, I proceeded to be digitally measured, and palpably probed. Whilst the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks, I couldn't help feeling like a total prat, all trussed up in straps and Velcro while pretending to row down an imaginary canal fully clothed with nothing to propel me forward other than a broomstick and the knowledge that everyone watching will never see my poor, reddening face again. Still, a small price for worldwide fame..."



Does my bum look big in this? *[Yes – Ed]*

Our Ben discovers it's not called *Splashdown...*

for...

nothing! Ithankyou!

spew of froth and brine, we badgered Rainbow to let us cast our inquisitive eyes on the more secretive, behind-closed-doors stuff going on. They were reluctant at first, but we were soon schmoozing with all manner of developers thanks to the odd persuasive Chinese burn. As Scott Douglas pointed out later in the day, "We want to make great games and we only work with people passionate about making them." In we went..

Through a locked door just beyond the cosy demo room was a vast 25,000 square foot hall specially rigged up for motion capture. Here, with the aid of computers the size of buffalo, Rainbow are able to produce in-house motion capture, a process it has been perfecting for years. But would the team need motion captured actors for *Splashdown*? Would they need a thesp to tread the boards? "We haven't actually motion captured a Sea-Doo," said Scott, "But we might motion capture the FMV sequences of the characters at the end of the game." Quick as a flash we donned a motion capture suit and within moments every embarrassing move we made was being monitored, scrutinized and recorded. If, by some slim chance there's a gondolier in the FMV for the end of the Venice track, then guess who had the pleasure? Yes indeed, tonight Matthew, I was that water boatman.

Sea-Doo capturing is a whole different ball game. Although engine sounds are easy to capture (even though getting the perfect sound involves turning a Sea-Doo's exhaust in on itself somewhere out in the Arizona desert where people won't be injured if it explodes) the movement of the craft relies on a far more basic approach. Riding the damn things.

After an hour in a plane we landed on a dusty strip of track loosely resembling a runway. A short taxi journey later, recovering from the horse tranquillizers surreptitiously dissolved in our soda BA Baracus-style, we arrived at perhaps the only body of water in the middle of the Arizona desert. Lake Havasu. It was teeming with watercraft including an empty Sea-Doo GTS – a flat bottomed craft which, although marketed as a family-friendly vehicle, still gleefully clouted the water with scant regard for our male genitalia.

//Our Sea-Doo GTS gleefully clouted the water with scant regard for the male genitalia//

WAVE RACERS

Take it from us – if ever there was a game in development that felt like the real thing, this is it. The GTS ate the water beneath it, gliding across the surface with the same ferocity we had witnessed back in the studio. The sound effects were precise reconstructions of the real thing as were the subtle nuances in handling. Wake and waves bobbed and bounced in reality as they did on-screen and the slightest movement of the throttle bolted us forward as it had done on dry land. To further emphasise how close the two were, Tim McKerscher, a demon in black and yellow, clambered aboard a terrifyingly evil-looking Sea-Doo XP – a craft surely designed by maniacs to be ridden by Pro Watercross Tour Champions for games journalists. After spending ten minutes thrilling us with his Sea-Doo strutts, acting out all the water-based drama of the final game, the sheets of spray given off by his craft struck a distant chord. This is a feature implemented in the current development build. Of course. So, what's the secret of *Spashdown*'s drop dead looks, then? Over to Brad Ruminer, Lead Artist. "Even though there are 95 people working here at Rainbow, only one-third of them are involved in games production, the other two-thirds concentrate solely on animation." And it how shows. The Caribbean level, consisting of uninhabited islands has in excess of 75,000 palm trees, each made up of 150 polygons each. Some mental arithmetic later and you'll find that adds up to over eleven million polygons just for trees on a single level.

Is *Splashdown* as smart as it looks though? On current evidence it more than lives up to its flashy wardrobe. The rival riders use the same physics engine as the main player, which, although sucking up a tremendous amount of processing power, means there will never be a moment when the game gets the better of you unless it's down to your misjudgment or lack of skill. A perfect example of "striking a balance between the player's ability to ride the Sea-Doo and the interpretation of the Sea-Doos capabilities" that Vice President Scott Douglas was metaphorically striving for earlier.

From the preview code we played, plus being given the opportunity to risk life and limb racing up and down a river with choruses of developers at the river bank screaming, "See, it's just like the real thing!", we can confirm that *Splashdown*'s shaping up to be a fun, fun, fun hybrid of arcade and sim that plays like a beast. Surf's up, people, and the water's looking just fine. □

Quality Control

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THE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

ON THE DVD

TEXT: MIKE GOLDSMITH/PHOTOGRAPHY: KATHARINE LANE-SIMS

WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

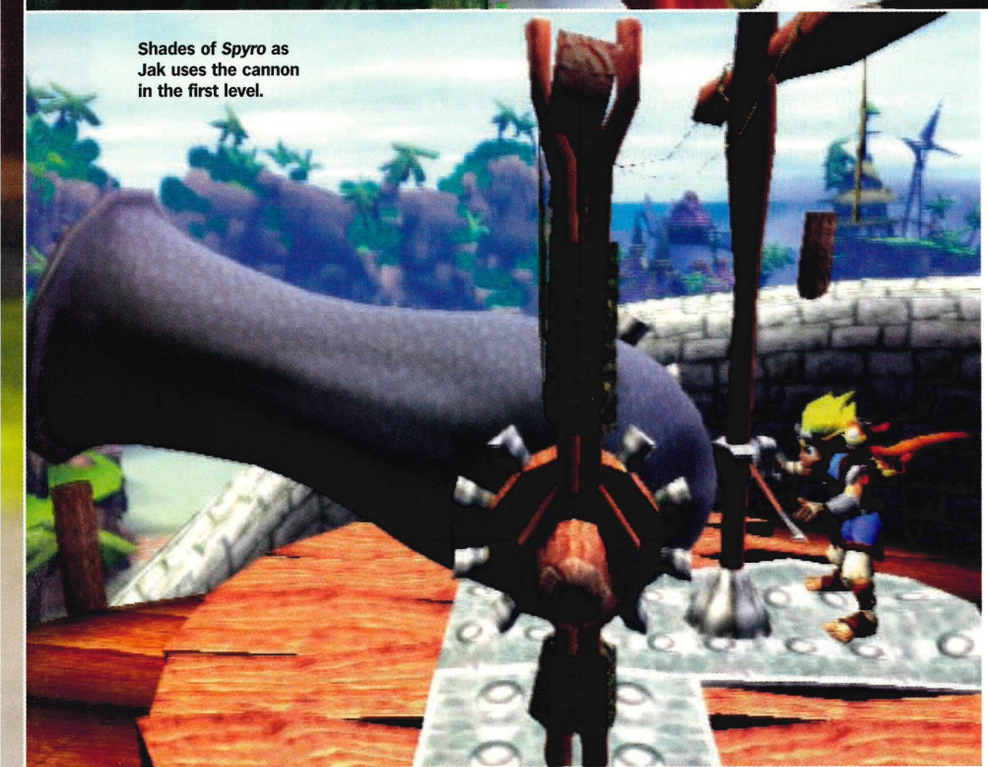
With their multi-million selling *Crash Bandicoot* series behind them, Santa Monica-based developer Naughty Dog are set to bring N64-style adventuring to PS2 with *Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*. The first magazine in the world to play the game, *OPS2* talked to President and top Dog Jason Rubin.

Head over to Naughty Dog's Web site and hidden amongst the biographies, gameographies and contact info, is a time line for the life and times of one *Crash Bandicoot*. Starting off in August 1994, it tells the story of how Jason Rubin and Andy Gavin moved from Boston to Los Angeles, after a chequered eight years of name changes, coding in garages, and producing such games as *Keef The Thief*, *Way Of The Warrior* and *Rings Of Power* for everything from the Atari ST to the ill-fated 3DO. Then came PlayStation.

Now published by Universal Interactive Studios, Gavin and Rubin's Naughty Dog studio set about creating both a PlayStation game and a character that would end up everywhere from Pizza Hut to toy stores to *The Simpsons*. (Fan Matt Groening spoofing the game with Lisa becoming addicted to one 'Dash Dingo'). A top-scrolling platformer that spawned two successful sequels (plus *Crash Team Racing*, a karting game that's still the PSone's best), *Crash Bandicoot* sold over 20 million copies worldwide, managing to crack the notoriously-

Naughty Dog puts and end to all those Project Y rumours with *Jax And Daxter*.

Meet the smiling Daxter, your best friend and monkey for your back.



Shades of *Spyro* as Jak uses the cannon in the first level.

Just one of the Disney-esque NPCs you'll encounter. Expect full lip-syncing for that cartoon feel.

MAKER'S DOZEN

The twelve things you can't continue reading without knowing about *Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*...

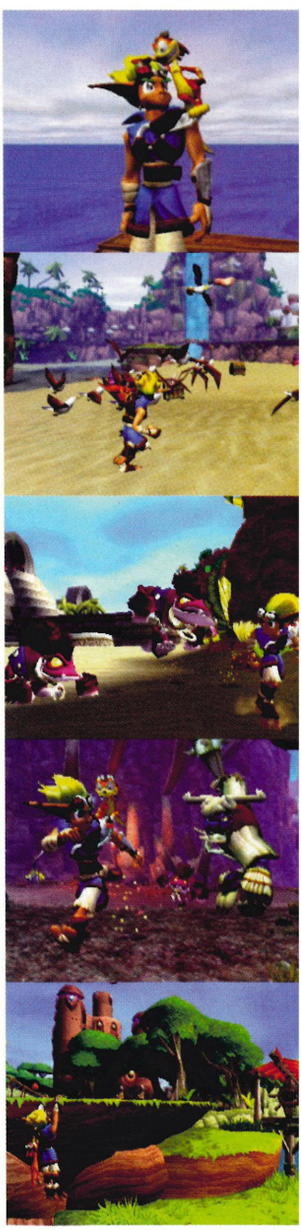
1. *Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*'s story begins with Jak ignoring the advice of his village sage, Samos, and setting off to explore the ruins of a forbidden island off the coast. Unfortunately, Jak accidentally knocks his friend Daxter into a huge pool of Dark Eco, a mysterious sludge-like energy source that transforms Daxter into a weasel-like rodent. It's now your job to change him back.

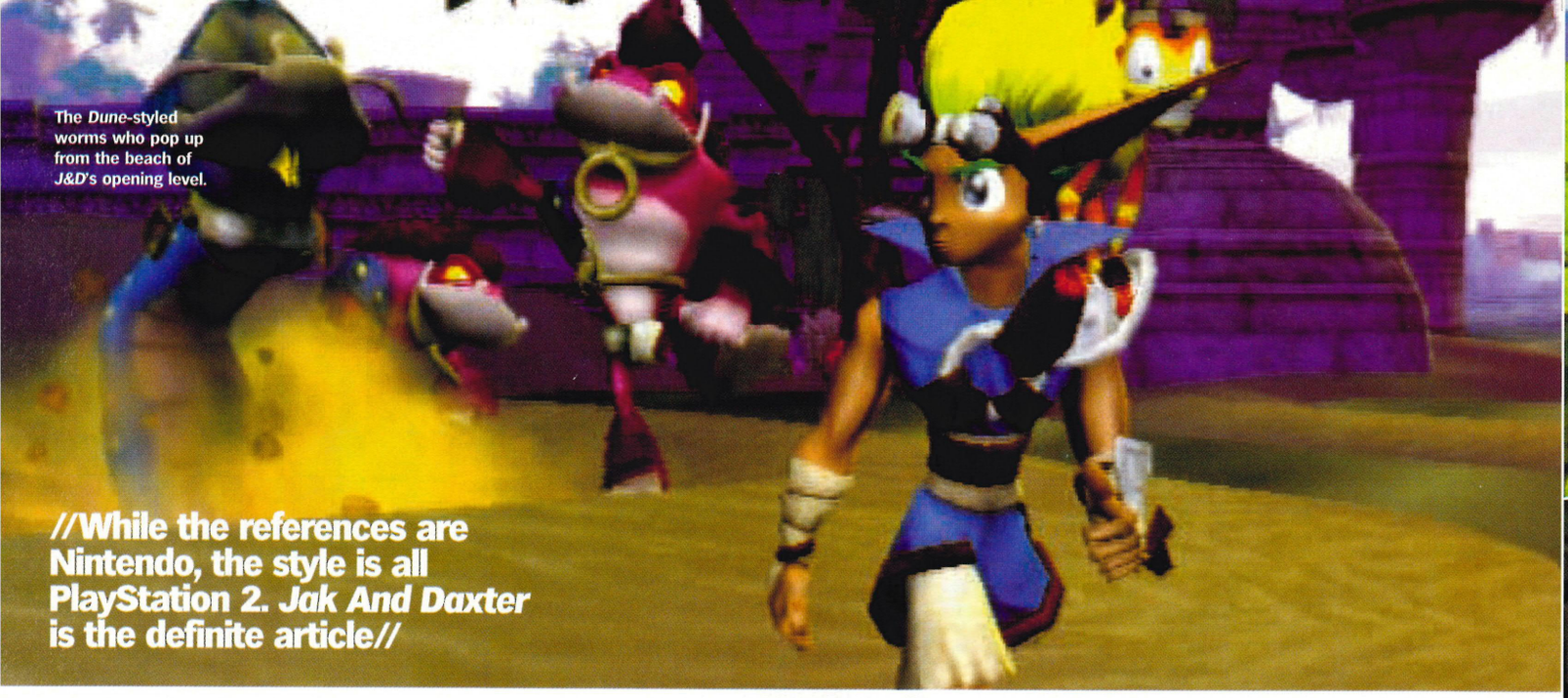
2. The transformed Daxter acts as Jak's sidekick. Perched on Jak's shoulder, Daxter will help you complete various tasks, show you where to go and generally offer up jokes, wisecracks and even dance routines along the way. Daxter's AI and animation already look superb, mirroring the advanced detail elsewhere in the game. You can expect a huge range of animations, full lip-syncing, advanced AI for enemies and NPCs plus a lushly-realised character in Jak, created from 3,200 polygons as opposed to the mere 500 used to model one Crash Bandicoot.

3. *Jak And Daxter* takes place on single, continuous piece of coastline. While the game is free-roaming, the game world is roughly split into 15 levels set around five village 'hubs', each level featuring seven main tasks and a plethora of sub-games. What's outside that stretch of coastline? Wait until the sequel.

4. While the game is primarily an action-adventure with platform and puzzle tasks, it does include racing – something Naughty Dog first successfully attempted with the PSone's *Crash Team Racing*. First- and third-person views are available, with Jak's goggles providing an on-screen HUD display that shows all your race stats, a 16x zoom option plus game status and save option. You'll be driving a Z-GraV Zoomer hoverbike that boasts Forward Thrust and Lower Prop Balance Driver Weight controls for extra rear lift and speed, allowing you to 'swivel' for fishtail turns. Keira is the mechanically-savvy daughter of Jak's mentor, and will help you out at race time.

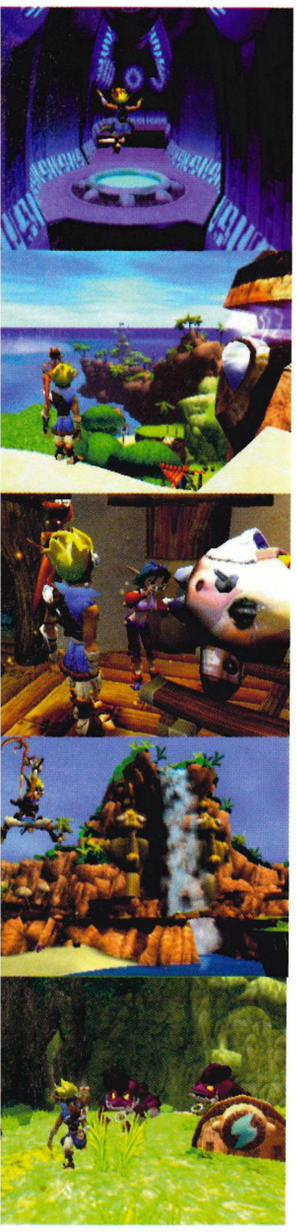
5. The game is based around the search for and collection of 'Eco', a naturally-occurring sludge-like energy source that created Jak and Daxter's world. Eco comes in different-coloured varieties all of which





The *Dune*-styled worms who pop up from the beach of *J&D*'s opening level.

//While the references are Nintendo, the style is all PlayStation 2. *Jak And Daxter* is the definite article//



MAKER'S DOZEN cont...

can be harnessed by Jak and used in various ways. Expect to learn more about Jak's mysterious ability to control Eco as the storyline progresses.

6. The power of PlayStation 2 has allowed Naughty Dog to create a massive free-roaming world that loads up once and then never again – the action is silky smooth with no slowdown or loading as you move between levels. You can travel to any place in the world. If you see it, you can go there and the world varies in vegetation, climate, style and the characters that populate it.

7. Jak and Daxter's main task is to find Gol Acheron, a sage who is expert in the ways of Dark Eco and could help transform Daxter back to human form. Unfortunately, the evil influence of Dark Eco has corrupted Acheron and his sister Maya, who are now hellbent on kidnapping the other four sages, unleashing Dark Eco on the world and transforming it for the worse forever.

8. Alongside the game's puzzles, tasks and collecting elements, *Jak And Daxter* will include five mini-games, including fishing, racing plus a shooting game involving a cannon that's a definite nod towards a similar task in *Spyro The Dragon*, created by Naughty Dog's pals, Insomniac.

9. Just as Jak and Daxter's world is a free-roaming one that you can travel anywhere in, it'll take you time to do it, even on your Z-GraV Zoomer. The sun rises and falls during the game, setting off marvellous lighting effects and a real sense of urgency as you rush to find Gol Acheron.

10. You'll discover more about the Precursors – a mechanically-advanced alien race who lived centuries before and created Eco to shape this world. Robot-like ruins from the Precursor times poke out of the landscape everywhere – you can guarantee there's a use for them...

11. If *Crash Team Racing* was Project X and *Jak and Daxter* is Project Y, what's Project Z? Naughty Dog aren't saying but given their previous track record on sequels and the quality of their debut PS2 offering, expect to discover more about Jak's world, his abilities and the mysterious Precursor race in a sequel plus other genre games using the characters.

12. You can see *Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy* in action on this issue's DVD, plus find out what Naughty Dog's Jason Rubin has to say about the game in our exclusive interview. More from Naughty Dog on *J&D* in future issues of *OPS2*.

difficult Japanese market and giving the PlayStation as close as it's ever got to a mascot. It was also one seriously good game. Just ask Lisa.

The time line stops in January 2000 with the immortal line, 'The post-*Crash* era has begun!' as Naughty Dog started work on their first title for PlayStation 2. Rumours leaked out about a game codenamed 'Project Y' but beyond a few quotes from Rubin saying it was a "character action game" and that it would incorporate the free-roaming cameras from *CTR*, info was non-existent. Back on the Naughty Dog Web site was not so much a clue as to the game behind 'Project Y', but a definite hint. Tucked away in a Q&A section was the answer to the question, 'What other developers do you respect?' The reply is a photo showing Nintendo game guru Shigeru Miyamoto (*Mario/Zelda/Donkey Kong*) playing *Crash Bandicoot*. Noting that *Crash's* back catalogue mirrors that of *Mario* (three platformers, a kart racer and a non-Naughty Dog developed party game), we should've guessed what the Dogs were up to.

And now we know. Due for PS2 this winter, *Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy* is the first game from Naughty Dog since the now 30-strong developer was bought by Sony Computer Entertainment America. It's a move by SCEA that guarantees Naughty Dog games will be exclusive to PS2 and as our world exclusive play of *Jak And Daxter* attests, that's A Very Good Thing indeed. A free-roaming blend of platforming, exploring, racing, adventure, strategy and mini-games based in an epic fantasy setting, *Jak And Daxter* is the first time any of Sony's platforms have experienced the huge worlds of Miyamoto's *Mario* and *Zelda* games for the N64. Yes, Insomniac's *Spyro The Dragon* games for the PSone may have aspired to recreating them in their own way, but *Jak And Daxter* is the definite article.

ECO WARRIORS

Visually a blend of Square's steampunk-driven *Final Fantasy IX* and Disney-esque fantasy animation, *Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy* is the story of a teenage boy named Jak. With his friend Daxter transformed into a rodent (and thus handy sidekick), you quickly find yourself in a plot to find and foil the evil Gol Acheron who, with his sister Maya, is intent on twisting Jak's world forever with the powers of Dark Eco. Fortunately Jak is a special boy, who can use the natural energy source called Eco to help him in his quest. He'll need it too as Jak's world is a vast one, composed of five villages with countless tasks to complete as you battle to defeat Acheron and transform Daxter back to his human form.

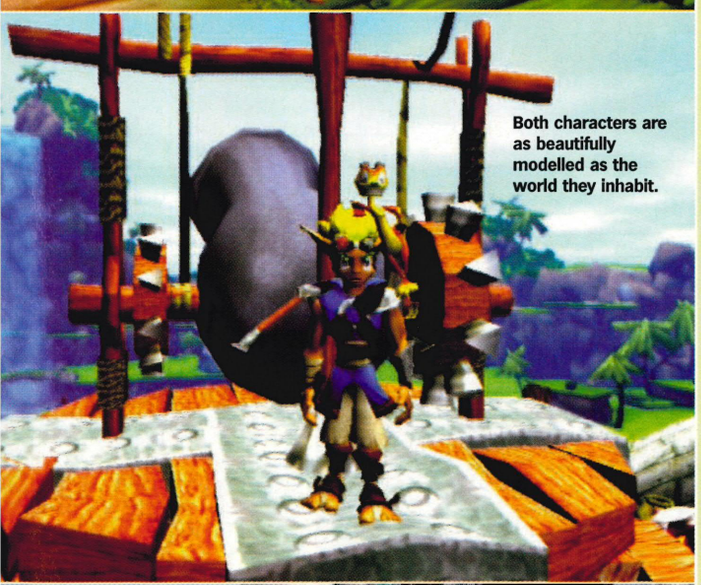
Jak And Daxter uses strong characterisation and an involving storyline to glue its disparate gameplay elements together, and it needs to. The game's platforming and ring-collecting elements reek of *Mario*, the storyline and set tasks scream a non-RPG *Zelda* while the team gameplay between *Jak And Daxter* recall *Banjo-Kazooie*, but while the references may be Nintendo, the look is all PlayStation 2. This is a fantasy-based adventure with a style all its own, blending Japanese RPG looks with a Western animated style plus, as logs roll towards you and crates are smashed for secret power cells, more than a hint of a certain apple-munching bandicoot. Lushly-detailed environments replace the blurred landscapes of Nintendo's N64 output, while the in-game humour, NPC interaction and sheer innovation will create a niche all of its own. It may quote from the best, but *Jak And Daxter* is its own game.

We've guessed about it, we've talked about it (see this month's DVD) but best of all, we were the first magazine in the world to actually play it. There's a smidge of slowdown and a few missing characters and props, but the game is so already there, it hurts. From a sensitive camera that rotates to frame Jak's actions to the varied tasks that populate the smooth learning curve of the opening level to the excellent AI of enemies who, if undefeated, will follow you no matter how quickly you run, *Jak And Daxter* simply reeks of quality.

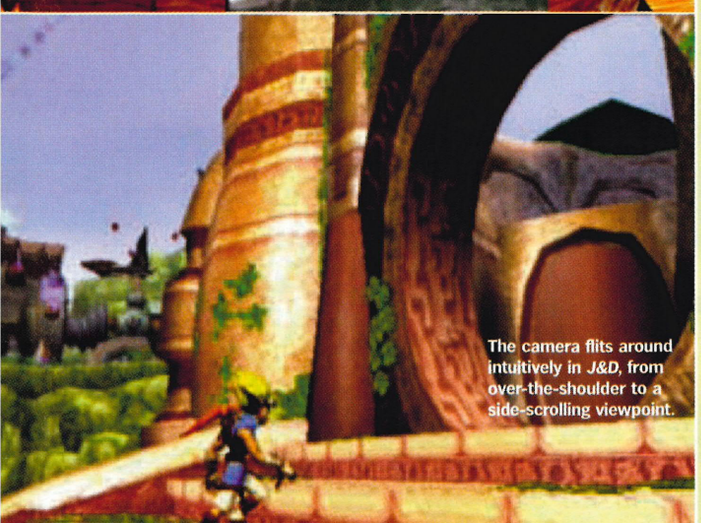
This November, alongside the world's best driving game, the most respected RPG and the only stealth adventure worth bothering about, PlayStation 2 will finally have a platform adventure that will potentially eclipse all others. *Gran Turismo 3*, *Final Fantasy X*, *Metal Gear Solid 2*... You can add *Jak And Daxter* to that list. □

Takes out those bad guys! If you don't, they'll follow you wherever you go.

Whether running, rolling, leaping or swimming, Jak's animations are some of the PS2's best yet.



Both characters are as beautifully modelled as the world they inhabit.



The camera flits around intuitively in *J&D*, from over-the-shoulder to a side-scrolling viewpoint.

The lush environs of sunny Bath and a happy Mr Rubin.

JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY

An small interview with **Jason Rubin** – President of Naughty Dog Inc. See this month's DVD for an exclusive look at the game he's finally talking about.

For the last 18 months we've been hearing lots of little whispers and rumours about this thing called Project Y, and we've finally got you over here so you can reveal all. So, tell us what it is...
Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy, that's the name of the game. It's a mixture of a lot of different things, there's a little *Zelda* in it, there's a little *Final Fantasy* in it, there's a lot of *Mario* in it, and it has definitely got its roots in *Crash* as well, although it's not a *Crash* game, it's definitely something new for us. The people who have been playing it outside of Naughty Dog say it's a very new experience because it's a lot more about the feeling and the exploration and not totally about collecting a certain number of this or a certain number of that, which is what the *Crash* games were based on. We really have tried to take everything together and make a game that I think is truly new and something people haven't played before.

How big a production is *Jak And Daxter?*
There's a huge budget. We've had 34 people working for two years plus some programmers who were on the project for a year before that. We have five full time animators who've come from Disney (among others) working solely on character animation. Gamers want more, they've seen what we've given them in the past and they want even better results – for around the same price!

Can you tell us a bit about the characters of *Jak And Daxter?*
The hero of the story is Jak, he's humanoid but not human and his destiny is yet to be revealed. Daxter the main character's sidekick has turned himself into a little fuzzy creature by falling into a vat of Dark Eco and we go through the story trying to change him back. Jak and Daxter have a mentor called Samos the Sage, he has a daughter called Keira who's kind of a tinkerer and makes vehicles and machinery and stuff. We have evil twins too, a brother and a sister who are pretty diabolical.

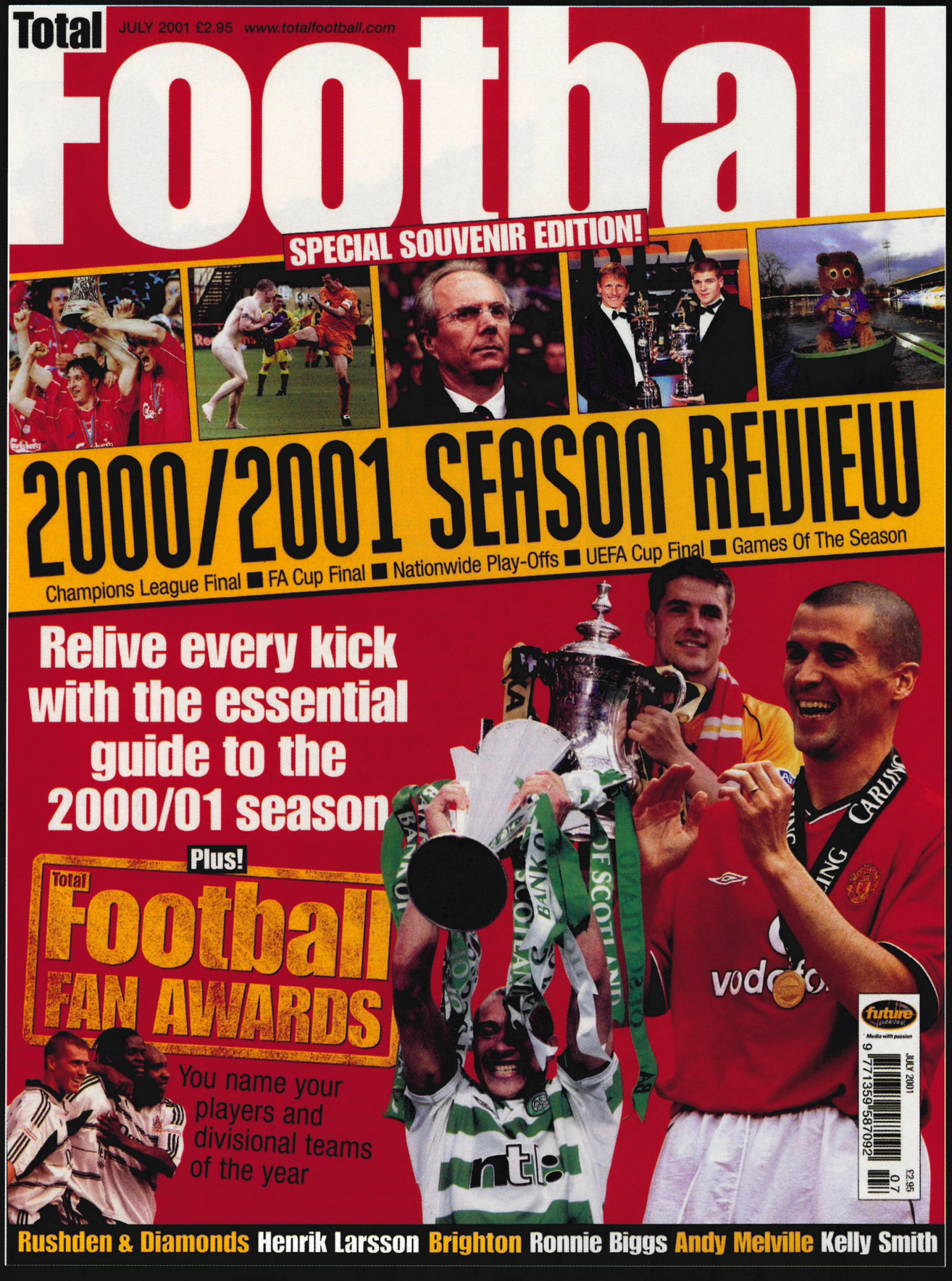
What kind of world do Jak and Daxter inhabit?
Well, Jak and Daxter live in a small village at the south end of the continent, and the entire world that's laid out for you is a no-load-time walk from wherever you are to wherever you want to go.

Eco plays predominantly in the game, it's kind of a magical force that oozes from the earth, there's multiple different colours and each one has a Sage attributed to it, but for some unknown reason Jak has the ability to take this Eco and use it for whatever its purpose is.
The Precursors were a culture who lived on the planet before any of our characters remember and they've left ruins all over the place. Some of the ruins they've left around are giant robots and no-one really knows what they were for, or what they did. Our evil sister and evil brother resurrect one of these robots and aim to use it to open a vault of Dark Eco, to unleash it on the world! Your mission is to stop the evil brother and sister from doing this.

//"There's a little *Zelda* in there, a little *Final Fantasy*, a lot of *Mario*"//

Why will this be an essential purchase?
There's nothing out there which can compete with it. The character action games which feature free roaming environments take a long time to develop and are quite hard to do. We're trying to do something totally new and I think, not having the loading times to contend with and being able to completely immerse yourself in the world is something sufficiently different! At the same time you'll always have things you need to do and there's action and enemies to deal with. I also think graphically we're going to set a new standard and people are going to want to play in a world that's really absolutely beautiful and extremely immersive, and I guarantee word of mouth is going to carry the game, so I really have no fears about its success.

Millions of years ago I think *Crash Team Racing* started off as Project X and then for the last two years, we've been hearing about Project Y which has now been revealed, so when can we expect Project Z?
Oh I think we'll wait until at least tomorrow to tell you that!! No, it's going to be a wait but, absolutely, Project Z... There will be one.



Total Football

On sale now!

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

We give you the greatest PS2 game yet

>>The waiting is over. The keys are in your pocket. Time to start the ignition and indulge in the game we've all been waiting for. Read the exclusive UK review only in *OPS2*.

REVIEWS

The latest PlayStation 2 games – reviewed and rated

OPS2 review ratings

If it's for PlayStation 2, and heading for a store near you, we've played it, argued about it, and, ultimately, judged it. Every issue, we look at the latest games and rate them out of 10:

10/10	Utterly essential
9/10	Hugely satisfying and entertaining
8/10	Highly recommended. Definitely worth your money
7/10	Good, solid fare, and well worth a gander
6/10	Better than average, and fine for fans of the genre
5/10	An average game of some merit
4/10	Poor, but may still have the odd moment
3/10	Extremely disappointing
2/10	To be avoided
1/10	Beer mat

OFFICIAL PlayStation 2 MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER

The OPS2 StarPlayer award
Awarded to any game that gets 9/10 or over. This is just our little way of trying to hammer home what is a fairly simple message: Get this game, and get it now.

Game reviews

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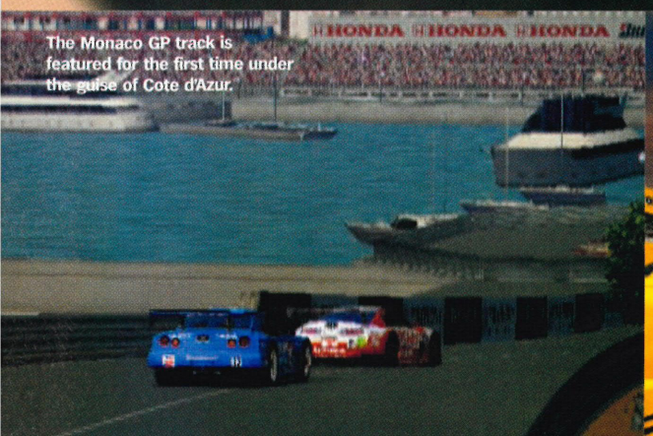
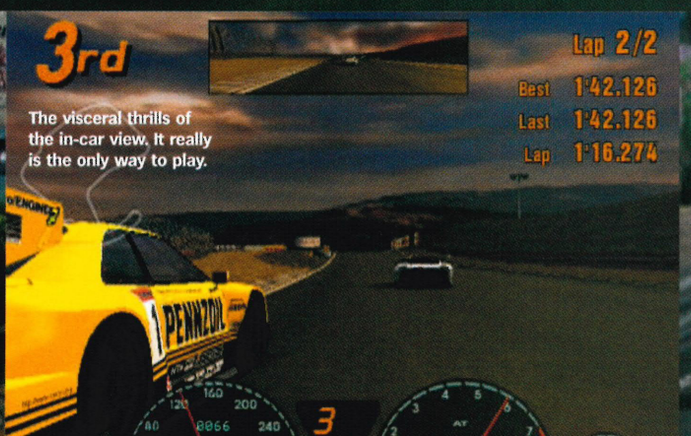
GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

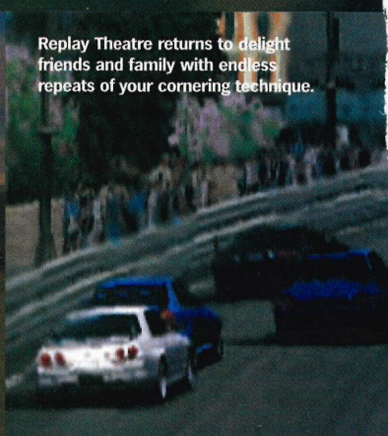
The world's greatest driving game, the best PlayStation 2 game so far... Are we ruining this for you?

The Monaco GP track is featured for the first time under the guise of Cote d'Azur.



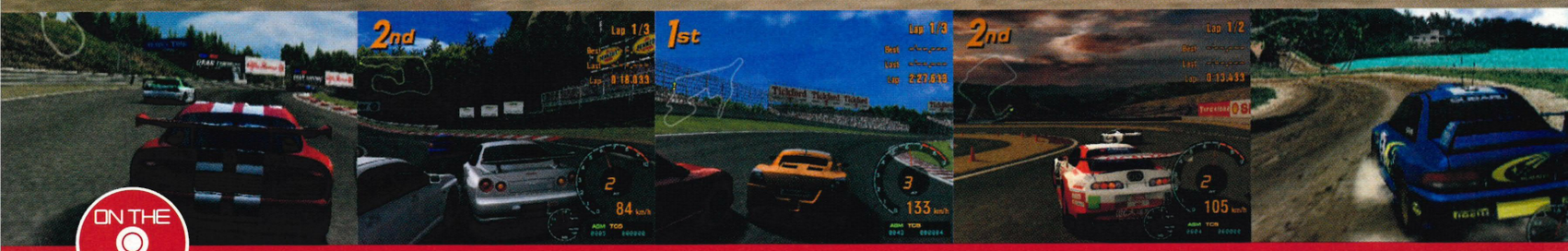


The visceral thrills of the in-car view. It really is the only way to play.



Replay Theatre returns to delight friends and family with endless repeats of your cornering technique.

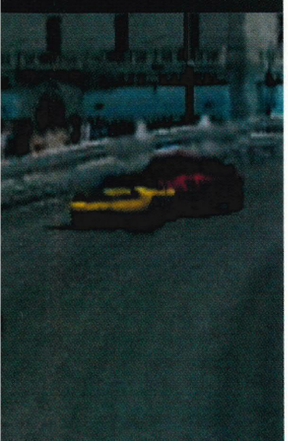
(Left) The decapitated cameraman immediately regretted taking this picture.



ON THE DVD

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

The engine roars, the tyres squeal and the world's greatest driving series accelerates onto PS2. It's time to get excited...



OFFICIAL PlayStation 2 MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Polyphony Digital
Price: £44.99, £TBA with steering wheel
Players: 1-2 (six with i.LINK)
Release: 27 July
Web site: uk.scee.com/gt3

Back story
A fairly well-known driving series that sold millions on PSone, *Gran Turismo*'s third instalment has finally roared off the PS2 starting grid with a stack of glowing accolades attached like bumper stickers. The best driving game available on any format, the best looking game on PS2, a life-consuming challenge, *GT3* is all this and more. You know you want it.

Some things in life are worth waiting for. Christmas, a cup of tea brewed to perfection, your first snog (with that girl or boy out of form 1E), a league championship after a 26 year wait – all more than worthy of a little breath holding.

And after pining for *Gran Turismo 3* for interminable months, gazing at every new screenshot like a starving man contemplating a bacon butty and taking each delay like a death in the family, we're not going to make you plough through a load of good bits/bad bits before delivering a verdict. It rocks harder than AC/DC, drives faster than Schumacher in a bad mood and plays as sweetly as the 1970 Brazil team. In short, *Gran Turismo 3* has been worth waiting for. If you have even the slightest interest in racing games, you need to own this beauty.

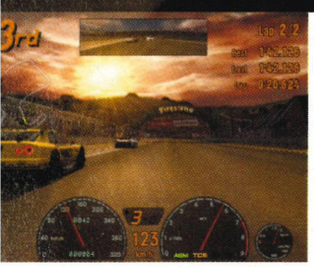
Originally intended as a PS2 launch title in Japan, over a year later we've finally got to grips with the world's best driving game on the world's most powerful videogame console and the result is predictably superb. Load it up, watch the fancy intro sequence and you're then faced with a comfortingly familiar menu system: Arcade, GT mode, Replay Theatre and the Aladdin's Cave of the Option menu are all present and correct. Forget the options, they can wait for now, before messing about with any of the settings you just want to know how well the thing plays.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Choose Arcade mode, pick a sexy car (the Nissan Skyline GT-R will do nicely) and head for that old favourite track Trial Mountain which appeared in both previous *GT* games. The camera swoops around the vehicle before entering the in-car view, the revs build, the starting bell rings and this is when the realisation you're in the presence of something special really hits home.

As you'd probably expect, the most obvious distinction between *GT3* and its PSone predecessors is in its visual splendour. Without question the best looker on PS2 so far and one of the most graphically impressive games ever made, the word 'breathtaking' just about does the game justice.

Super cars come out to play on the Laguna Seca circuit – long straights mean speeds of over 200km/h can be reached.



Sunlight can often be dazzling in both senses of the word.

From the first straight on Trial Mountain the sheer realism of the vehicles and the surroundings almost defies belief. After negotiating the two right-hand chicanes and bombing through the tunnel, you speed up the hill to the forest section then veer off the track and start dribbling like a fool at the stunning vista in front of you – sunlight breaking through a canopy of trees, reflecting off the cars and casting perfect real-time shadows on the vehicles and the road ahead. It may be totally incidental in the grand scheme of things, it may not affect the gameplay one iota, but it doesn't half add an extra gloss to the overall experience.

Another example of astonishing graphical flair occurs on the newly rain-soaked night track, Special Stage Route 5. With rain making an appearance in the *GT* series for the first time, Polyphony has used this as an ideal opportunity to really show off. Puddles on the tarmac ripple in the breeze, reflecting lights from all around, picking up the glare of the headlamps as you drive overhead and continuing to reflect as your tyres splash through them, turning the water into a misty spray. Wet weather has been done before in driving games and done extremely well, but never done to anything like this standard.

//The sheer realism of the vehicles and the surroundings almost defies belief//

And if you're lucky enough to have a widescreen TV, all this can be viewed in glorious anamorphic 16:9. One of the few games to make full use of home cinema capabilities, playing *GT3* in these conditions is pretty much gaming nirvana (crank up the surround sound and you won't even hear the neighbours complaining).

GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNING

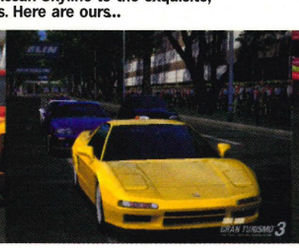
Of course, all the fancy effects in the world wouldn't make any difference if *GT3* motored like a clapped-out Robin Reliant. Thankfully, it's one of the fastest racers we've ever had the joy of playing and handles like a delightful dream starring Destiny's Child and a bowl of whipped cream. It still *feels* like the glorious racing experience we've come to know and love from the previous games, only this time it's considerably more so. The extra power of PS2 makes *GT3* move at an ultra-smooth

A CLASS ACT

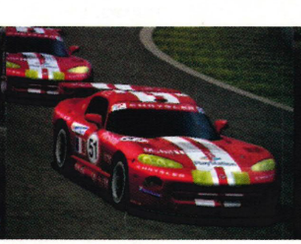
GT3's vehicles come in five categories. These are organised by speed in the GT mode and by class in Arcade. There are loads of sexy motors that tempt the eye, from the smart and solid Nissan Skyline to the exquisite, turbo-charged Jaguar XJ220, and everyone will soon decide on their favourites. Here are ours..

Class C – Mini Cooper 1.3i
A truly dreadful car. Low top speed, ponderous throttle, by the time you've crawled off the starting grid and reached second gear, the rest of the field will be halfway round the track. But that's the whole charm of the Mini Cooper. It's so appaling that if you achieve any success in this car then you can consider yourself a *GT* expert.

Class B – Vauxhall Speedster
It looks odd and it's advertised by Griff Rhys Jones in a comedy beard but don't let that put you off the nippy Speedster. Although nowhere near the fastest in its class, Vauxhall's curve machine is a joy to drive. Handling is smooth and forgiving and with some improved parts this can be a motor to be reckoned with.



Class A – Honda NSX type S
Fairly cheap compared to other vehicles of its quality and with a much greater capacity to upgrade than most, you can get hold of an NSX early on in the GT mode, spend money on better parts and stay behind the wheel through most of the mid-level cup races, competing against, and beating a range of far more expensive motors.



Class S – Viper GTS-R
Super cars are all pretty much equal, so picking a favourite is more about aesthetics than performance. The Viper GTS-R looks superb but it's ridiculously powerful engine and muscle-car design mean you have to struggle to keep the car on the road. In truth, it's a bit of an animal and that's exactly why we like it.

Rally – Toyota Corolla
Again, there isn't much to choose between the rally cars. They have virtually the same performance and they all handle in the same reckless fashion. Our rally car of choice is that veteran offroader, the Toyota Corolla. We could be imagining it, but it just seems to be less prone to oversteering than its more illustrious rivals.

Q&A

MOTORMOUTH

***OPS2* caught up with Kazanori Yamauchi at this year's E3. The game had been finished, but we had a few bonus questions to ask...**

PHOTO: GAVIN ROBERTS

We've just seen the Formula One style cars 'hidden' at the end of *GT3*...
We were always interested in including an 'open wheel' formula car in the series prior to *GT3*. However, with the advancement of the hardware and graphics, the team was finally comfortable with including a formula car.

Is it an FIA licensed car or a Formula One style car?
It's a Formula One 'type' car. It's a creative design.

But maybe one day?
I'd like to stress that the Formula 'type' cars seen in *GT3* are just a 'goodie', so to speak, for the users when they get to the latter segments of the game. If we were to do an official game, then of course we would like to include the license from the FIA.

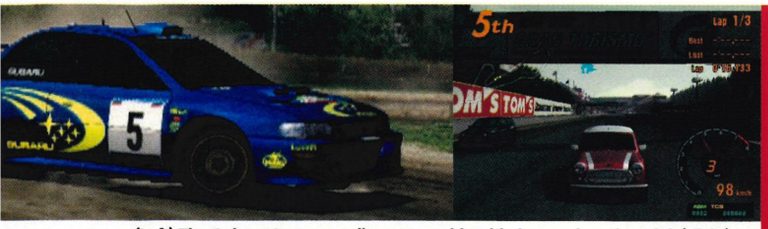
Can you tell us a little about the European version of the game?
There is one additional model in the European version of the game. The Honda Accura RSX, in Japan it's known as the Honda Integra Type R. The reason why it's not in the Japanese version of the game is because *GT3*'s release date was earlier than Honda's release.

With the new Hard Disc Drive for PlayStation 2, are there possibilities for an expansion pack?
Yes, there is the possibility that players may be able to download the car of their preference – but not in this version!

Where do you see the future of *Gran Turismo* in terms of online play?
One thing that we don't want to do with network play is just have a simple 'battle' between two players over the Net. There are many possibilities that I would like to look into.

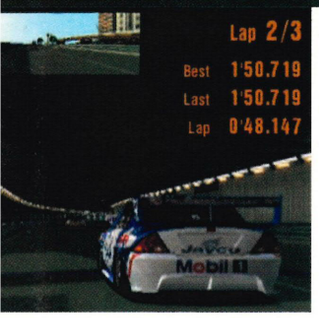
Reports after the Tokyo Game Show mentioned '*Gran Turismo* Network'...
(Laughs) I would say that's not official! However, I like the idea of calling the first network-compatible *Gran Turismo* game '*GTN*'. But that's not the final title. Again, I would like to stress that I do not just want it to end up as a head-to-head racing game over the Net. I'd like to like to look into ways of broadening the gameplay experience.

When we last spoke, you mentioned the possibility of putting Polyphony's PSone titles *Moto Toon GP* and *Omega Boost* into *GT3* as mini-games. Just how much has the game changed during development?
We always have a final goal when developing a game, but we do not always 'fix' that goal. We were adding features to the game right up until three days before the master submission. The Formula One fantasy cars are a good example. These cars were added maybe two weeks before the master submission! **MG**



(Left) The Subaru Impreza rally car, considerably better than the Mini. (Right)

Doing a ton round the streets of Monte Carlo is a beautiful thing.



Monaco's famous tunnel. Scene of many a car crash/million dollar drug deal/illicit sexual encounter...

60 fps with never a hint of slowdown, and thanks to quicker feedback from joypad to game, every aspect of the driving mechanics is noticeably more responsive. Acceleration, braking, changing gears, cornering – it's all remarkably immediate and, consequently, the game plays better than it ever has before. The difference between vehicles has also been captured to perfection and whether you're struggling to control the Dodge Viper's guttural horsepower or enjoying a smooth-as-silk ride in a Jaguar XKR, the contrast is both immediately obvious and totally convincing.

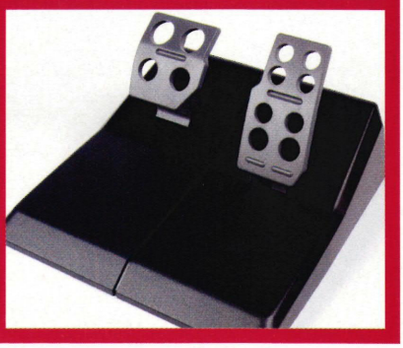
As usual, the Arcade mode should be your first port of call to sample these delights. The ideal venue to familiarise yourself with the game and have some fun before committing yourself to the life-consuming exercise that is the GT mode. It's also the place to go to unlock all the tracks and test drive super cars and rally cars without the weeks of play and piles of cash required to get the keys to them in GT mode. A variety of motors are available in each racing class – C, B, A, Super and Rally – so if you want to go for a runabout in a Mini Cooper or burn some serious rubber in the Chevrolet Corvette, Arcade will satisfy all your immediate racing requirements.

WHEELY GOOD!

The dedicated *GT* steering wheel takes a bow.

Here's a scenario: you're playing *GT3* with a joypad, it's amazing, the cars react perfectly to every minuscule movement of the analogue stick, you think the control couldn't possibly get any better – but then you try it with the Logitech *Gran Turismo* steering wheel and, incredibly, it does.

Available packaged with the game this is, by far, the best combination of wheel and game we've ever encountered. In tune with *GT3's* handling physics to a pitch perfect degree and boasting sensational force feedback which responds uncannily to your performance, if you've got the moolah and the inclination, this is the ideal way to play *GT3*.



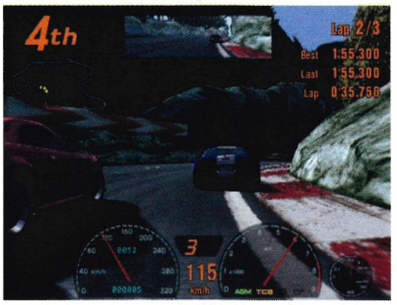
WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?

A welcome feature from *Gran Turismo 2* is retained here, the Load Garage option which lets you import a personal garage of vehicles from the GT mode and use them in Arcade. It's a great feature on two counts: firstly, because the Arcade mode only has a limited selection of cars and this enables you to earn some of the more illustrious motors in GT mode then bring them across. And considering Arcade is the only mode for two-player battles, it also means you can select a favourite car from your GT garage – tuned to perfectly compliment your driving preferences – and use it to humiliatingly whup a mate in a two-player contest. Can't be bad.

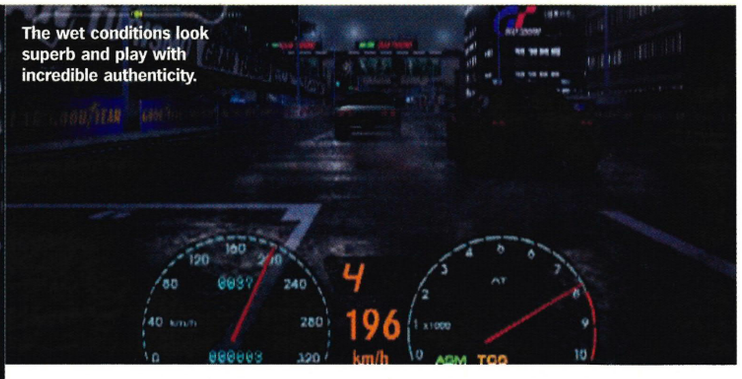
Single Race, Time Attack and Free Run are the other options in the Arcade mode, all of them deserve close attention and the only remotely technical decisions you'll have to make are the choices between automatic or manual gears and Racing or Drift handling. Racing is the traditional driving method: approach the bend on the outside, ease off the accelerator and nudge the brake, if necessary, as you turn to the inside, then re-apply the throttle as early as possible to speed out of the bend.

Alternatively, Drift is a more exciting and far riskier technique that's ideally suited to the rally tracks: approach the corner on the outside, wait until the very last moment then violently swing the car into the bend, oversteering wildly and deliberately skidding through the apex of the turn with minimal speed loss. It's treacherous but

Don't even think about braking on the rally circuits, just powerslide around those bends.

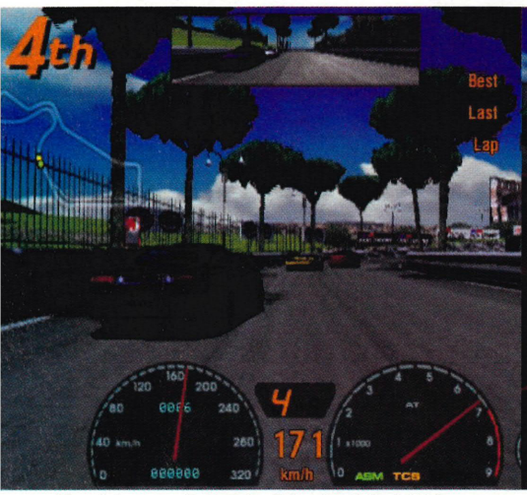


Watch the paintwork! Suicidal overtaking moves are vital to work your way through the field.

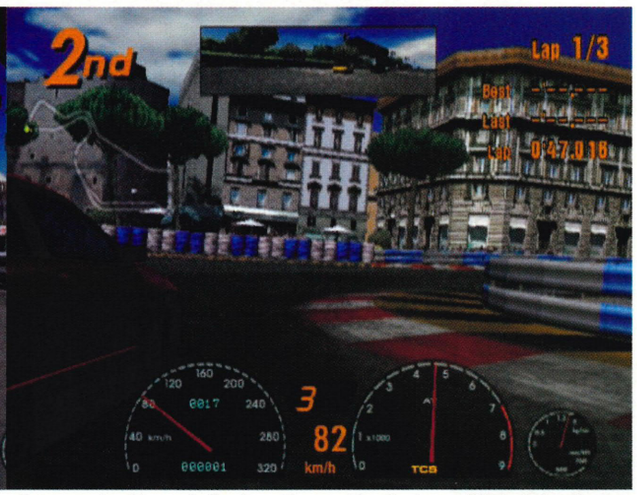


The wet conditions look superb and play with incredible authenticity.

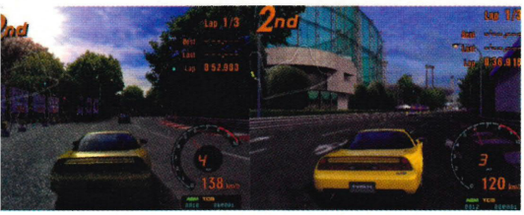
Step One: Storm up from Last to third. Step Two: Crash spectacularly and drop to fourth. Step Three: Finish in second. Sulk. Try again...



The picturesque Rome circuit is a tourist's delight...



...But eyes should remain firmly on the road for the two evil hairpin bends.



Tokyo R246 is a cracking new addition to the track list.

A windscreen full of dust is the price for trailing on rally tracks.

when you get it just right you'll feel like Colin McRae at his four-wheel-driving best.

A RALLY GOOD TIME

Mr McRae is actually an extremely appropriate name to drop because *GT3* has retained its predecessor's rally action but improved it out of all recognition. It's almost as if Polyphony played the magnificent *Colin McRae Rally 2* and thought 'Hmm, that's good, we'll slap it in our game.' Although, obviously, nowhere near as comprehensive as Codemasters' rallying classic, the offroad racing in *GT3* is fantastic and has much in common with McRae's second outing, especially where handling is concerned.

There's far less need for sensible driving and niceties such as braking when you're offroad, so loosen the suspension, put your foot down and use the rally races as the perfect excuse to drive like a nutter. Rally cars are heavier than their road equivalents but have far greater traction, allowing you to throw them into bends and slide round sideways, hardly losing any speed and churning up a billowing cloud of dust that will blind your unfortunate pursuer. It's thrilling stuff and so radically different from road racing that it's almost like having two games in one. It also brings out the best in *GT3*'s Dual Shock compatibility as the pad responds brilliantly to the contours of the bumpy terrain and the outrageous skids and jumps that can be pulled off.

//Put your foot down and use the rally races as the perfect excuse to drive like a nutter//

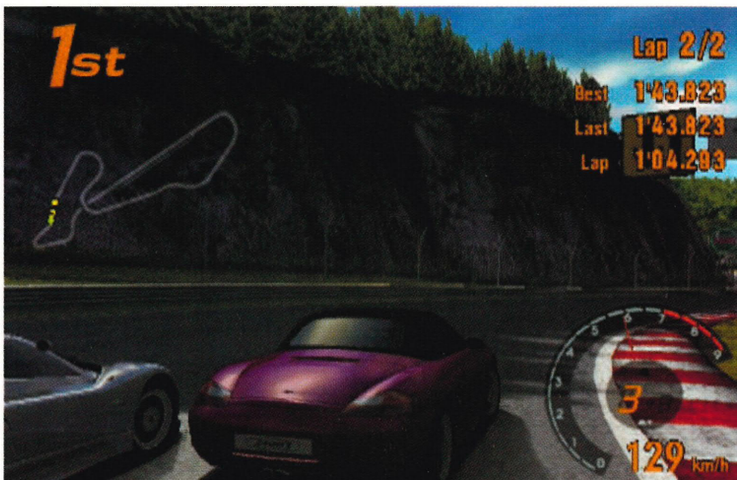
Despite the undoubted charms of Arcade, every *Gran Turismo* fan knows where it's really at. *GT3* is a hardcore game for hardcore racers and its all-encompassing GT mode is so hardcore it makes the Wu-Tang Clan look like S Club 7.

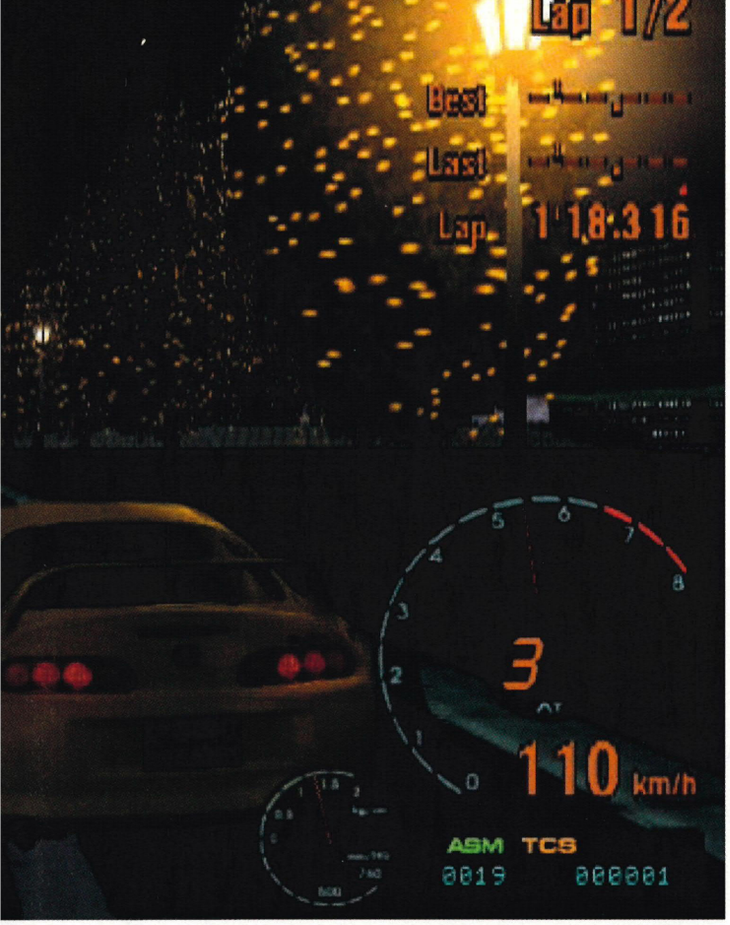
The peerless format of *GT* remains, sensibly, untouched. The License Center is still the hub of the game with six driving certificates to be won (from B through to Rally) and the licences you have dictate the races you can enter – for instance, once you've collected enough money to buy a rally car, you'll have to earn that Rally Licence before any offroad championships can be entered. Winning the licences is almost a game in itself and those with enough patience and driving skills to achieve an all-gold rating are rewarded with a prize car (which often turns out to be mediocre but at least you can sell it off and add the cash to your savings).

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

On the subject of vehicles, a quick tour around the Car Dealer will show you there are less of them than appeared in *GT2*, not just a few less, we're talking hundreds here. This is due to the increased amount of time it takes to lovingly render each car model now that PS2 enables almost photo-realistic detail – where a *GT2* car would be built with around 300 polygons, the same vehicle in *GT3* consists of a mind-boggling 3000. So, yeah, there may be fewer of them but the cars that are available look absolutely stunning (squint at the screen and you'll swear you're watching the real things).

Japanese manufacturers remain the most strongly represented while the number of cars from European and US companies has been reduced considerably. Only two motors each from Peugeot and Audi, just the one representative for BMW, Volkswagen, Fiat, Citroen, Renault and, surprisingly, the Mustang Cobra is the only reasonably-priced vehicle in the Ford stable.



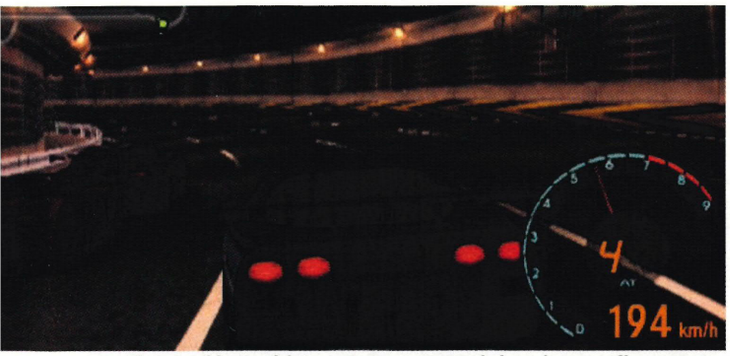


The night tracks are ideal for showing off *GT3*'s amazing graphical prowess.

On the plus side, the amount of seriously desirable performance cars hasn't been affected and neither has the craving to keep racing and keep adding more cash to the coffers until you've got enough for the Aston Martin Vantage, or the Ford Focus rally car, or the Lister Storm V12 or the... You get the idea. In total, 150 vehicles are available and only the most extreme petrolheads could moan about the selection on offer.

The reduction in the car tally does means that, with the measly amount of cash you're given at the start of the GT mode, only a couple of entry level vehicles are actually affordable. The selection is limited even further by the fact that the option to purchase used cars has been dropped from this third outing. We reckon this is a good thing though, as it prevents the shortcut of buying a decent second-hand car and coasting through the Beginner's League because the opposition are all racing in inferior vehicles. It's now far more of a level playing field and with the entry level cars you're restricted to, passage through the game really has to be earned.

Your best bets when starting out on the long road to GT success are the Toyota Vitz RS and Mazda Demio. Low-powered and almost painfully slow they may be, but they're good enough to achieve victory in the first Beginner's cups and



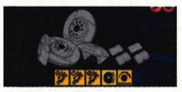
The tunnel in Special Stage Route 5. Key tactic here: bounce off opponents.

NAME THAT TUNE

Everything you always wanted to know (and probably didn't want to know) about the tune-up parts that can improve your vehicle. Warning! The following analysis may cause severe headaches for readers of a non-technical disposition. As for spannerheads, dive right on in...

SUSPENSION AND BRAKES

1. Sports Suspension, Semi-Racing Suspension, Full Customise Suspension
The better types of suspension offer gradually more levels of customisability in the Settings menu, eventually enabling you to adjust the height of the car, suspension ratio and spring rate to suit your racing style.



2. Racing Brakes
Obviously improves the braking power of the vehicle. Note that cheaper brakes may wear in the latter stages of an endurance race, reducing their overall effectiveness.

3. Brake Balance Controller
Alter the Brake Balance in the Settings menu to suit your preferences. If you adjust the balance between the front and rear brakes, remember that front braking has a tendency to understeer whereas rear braking oversteers and can lead to spins.

ENGINE

1. Sports Muffler and Air Cleaner, Semi-Racing Muffler and Air Cleaner, Racing Muffler and Air Cleaner
Improve the flow of air to the engine, enabling it to burn fuel more efficiently at high revs, thus increasing the power and speed of the vehicle.

2. NA Tune Stage 1, NA Tune Stage 2, NA Tune Stage 3
Maximises the power of natural aspiration engines by increasing rev output. Incompatible with turbo engines, if you have both NA and turbo, only one can be fitted.

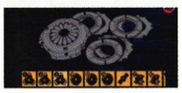
3. Port Polish
Cleans the engine's air ducts to improve airflow and reduce friction. No great increase in power but this is a necessary upgrade for NA engines.

4. Engine Balance Tune
Balances the timing of the pistons' output which allows energy to be used more efficiently, boosting the engine's power.

5. Soup up
Enhances the cylinder capacity, providing more power and even quicker power displacement.

6. Tuned ROM -
A monitoring system that automatically adjusts the rate of fuel consumption and ignition timings to optimise the power.

TRANSMISSION



1. Sports Clutch, Twin Plate Clutch, Triple Plate Clutch
Upgrading will transfer more torque to the wheels and drastically reduce slippage when shifting up a gear, therefore improving your car's acceleration.

2. Sports Flywheel, Semi-Racing Flywheel, Racing Flywheel
Lighter flywheels sharpen the engine's exhaust output and rev count loss, improving the vehicle's acceleration and deceleration.

3. Carbon Prop Shaft
Placed between the differential gear and the engine, this slightly reduces the car's weight to help acceleration.

4. Close Transmission, Superclose Transmission and Full Customise Transmission
Move the gears closer to provide quicker acceleration (but with a reduced top speed). Full Customise lets you configure the gear ratios to your own preferences in the Settings menu.

5. 1way LSD, 1.5way LSD, 2way LSD, Full Customise LSD
Limited Slip Differential attempts to make driven wheels move at the same speed so that the wheel with the most resistance gets the required grip, lessening the chance of skidding.

TURBO

1. Turbo Stage 1, Turbo Stage 2, Turbo Stage 3, Turbo Stage 4
Use exhaust energy to power a fan which drives more fresh air into the engine. Therefore, the fuel is burnt more efficiently and the engine power is increased considerably, giving you better acceleration and a higher top speed. Turbo is only effective when the engine is running at high revs so it should only be used with powerful cars.

2. Sports Intercooler, Racing Intercooler
Decreases the air temperature in the engine, enhancing its output. A Turbo heats up the air in the engine and an intercooler should be fitted to counteract this.

TYRES

Control Tyres, Sports Tyres, Racing Tyres, Dirt Tyres
The softer a tyre the more friction it has with the road. The more friction there is, the better the grip and therefore the cornering. Unfortunately, friction also generates heat, so while softer tyres grip and race better, they also heat up and get damaged faster, forcing you to change tyres in the pits during lengthy races. Naturally, the dirt tyres should only be used on rally cars.

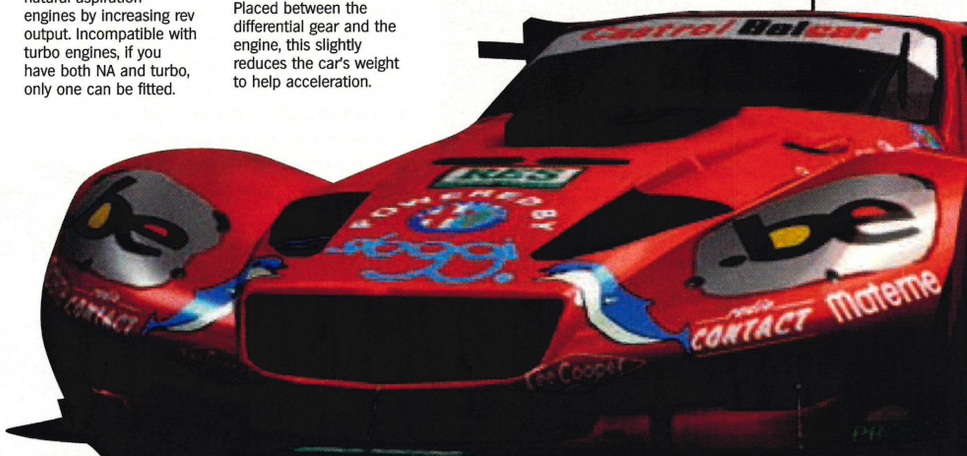
MISCELLANEOUS

1. Weight Reduction 1, Weight Reduction 2, Weight Reduction 3
These different degrees of weight reduction replace car parts with gradually lighter ones to reduce the overall weight of the car. Running the vehicle will then, obviously, take less power, meaning it can (and will) go faster.

2. AYC Controller
Active Yaw Control determines the rotation of the car on its axis, shifting the car's weight in the direction of the turn. This improves cornering but reduces stability: increasing the likelihood of spinning and tyre wear.

3. Variable Center Dif.
Allows you to control the center differential in the Settings menu.

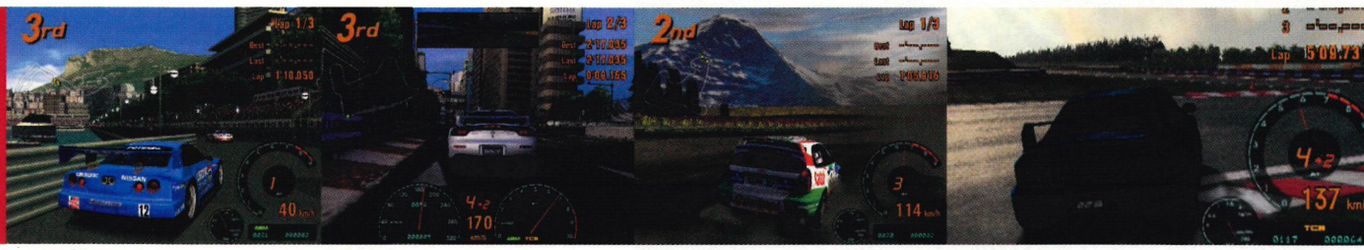
Sadly, furry dice can't be purchased in the Tune Shop.



TRACKS OF MY TYRES

A guide to *Gran Turismo 3's* tasty new circuits.

GT3 features a total of 36 race tracks, although 16 of these are reversed and one of them is just Special Stage Route 5 in the wet. So, if you want to be pedantic, there are actually 19 proper tracks. Of these 19, four are new to the series. Let's see how well they shape up...



1. Cote d'Azur
This is the Monaco Grand Prix circuit cunningly using an alter-ego. An extremely tight, twisty course featuring numerous chicanes, sensible driving is required here and any outrageous overtaking manoeuvres should be saved for the two long straights.

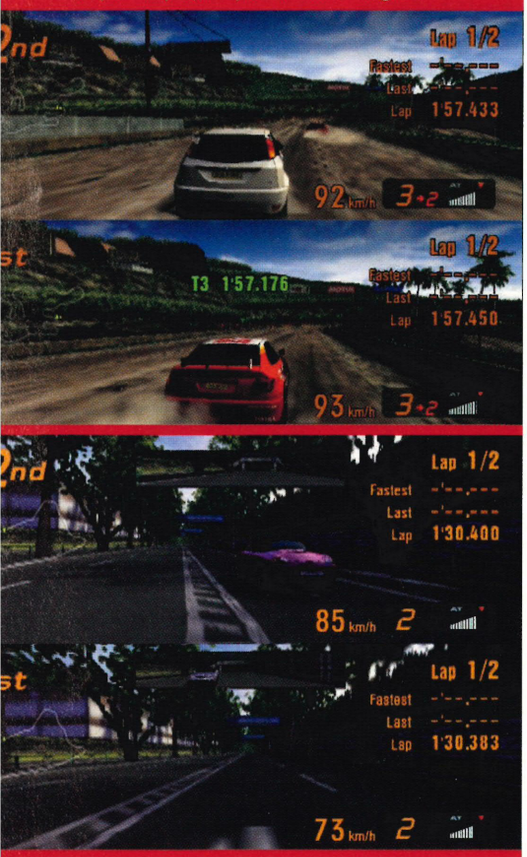
2. Tokyo R246
Set right in the middle of Tokyo, those who know the city will be able to spot familiar buildings like the SCEI HQ. It's a technical course with several chicanes and a horrible hairpin bend near the start, but between these tough bits are some storming straights.

3. Swiss Alps
An extremely fast dirt track, you can go hell for leather chucking your motor into the bends and skidding through at 90 degrees. It's vital to take the lead though, because if you do get stuck behind your opponent you'll be driving half-blind into a cloud of dust.

4. Complex String
Found in the My Home section of the GT mode, Complex String is the ultimate test drive course. An elaborate assembly of every feature a race track could possibly have, if you can master this swine there should be nothing to fear from the other circuits.

MULTIPLAYER MOTORING

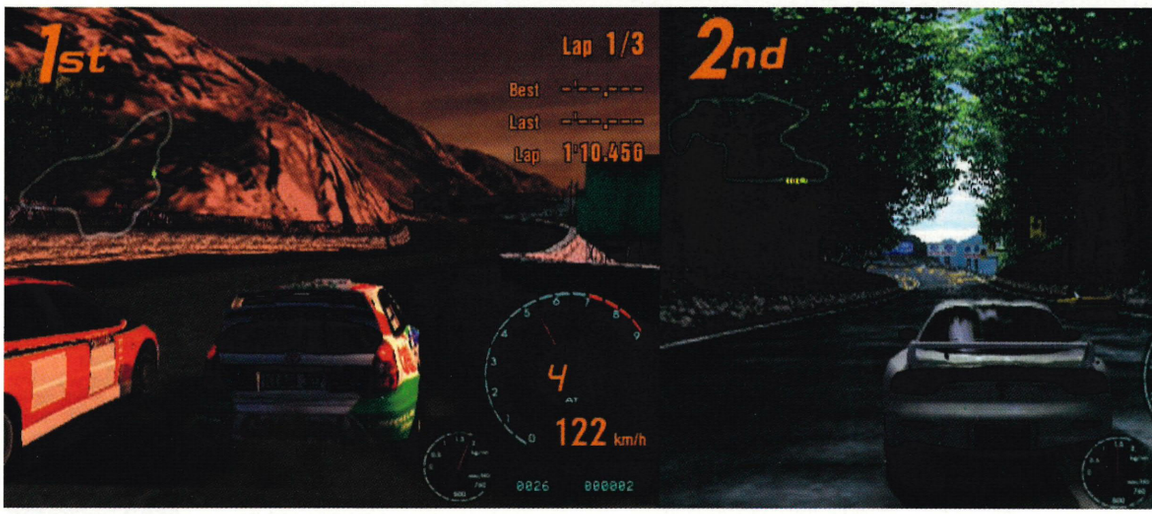
Link up with a pal (or six) for maximum racing fun.



Besides the traditional magic of Arcade's two-player races, *Gran Turismo 3* also introduces the genius that is i.LINK Battle. Up to six players can battle it out at once – each bringing a TV, a PS2, a link cable, and a copy of the game to the party – and with a sextet of speed freaks all set up in the same room and racing hell for leather, it's one of the greatest and most exciting multiplayer experiences in gaming history.

There's absolutely no slowdown and because you're playing against evil human opponents rather than computer AI while the racing is beautifully unpredictable. It's like playing *GT3* in the arcades, except the arcade is in your own home.

We haven't had this much fun since six-player *Daytona USA* and four-player *Gauntlet* back in the coin-op days of yore. The tragedy is that, as with other link-up games such as *F355 Challenge* on DC and *WipEout* on PSone, only a few people will ever get to try it out. But even if you can only gather two loads of kit together, it's more than worth the hassle, as this really is state-of-the-art and the pinnacle of home multiplayer racing.



The two mountains, Smokey (left) and Trial (right), have little in common except for their thrilling descents.

can be improved considerably by spending your winnings at the Tune Shop and adding a load of new parts (see the Name That Tune for the lowdown on souping-up your car).

MONEY MATTERS

Working through Beginner's League will provide you with enough cash to buy a new motor (we went for the tasty Subaru Impreza) and then you're ready to take on the Amateur League where the prospect of tyre wear and pit stops come into play. The next step is to upgrade your new car until it can challenge for victory in the Amateur competitions, use your savings to eventually buy an even better car (the Lotus Esprit Sport 350 was our choice), move on to the Professional Championship and before you know it, weeks have gone by and you're still nowhere near to seeing everything GT mode has to offer.

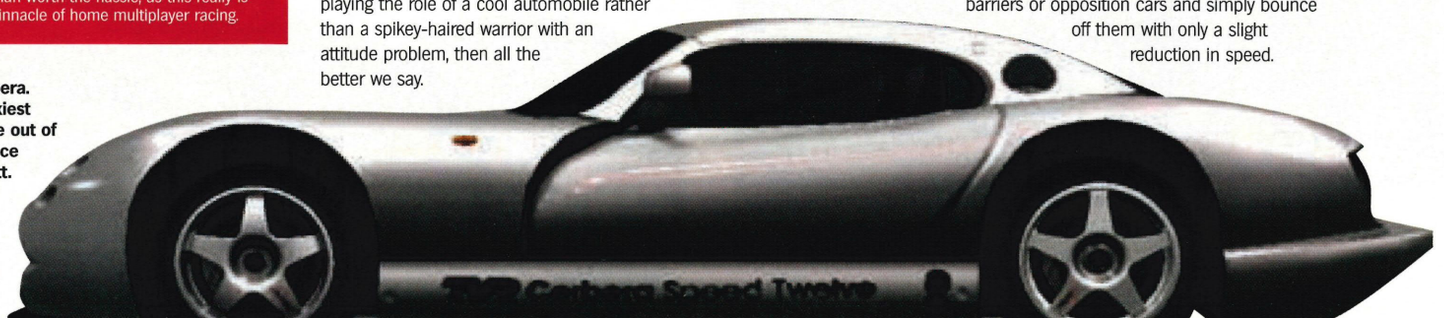
This progression system is so well planned and expansive that it's almost like the structure of an RPG. It's just that, instead of fighting numerous random battles to earn enough money to buy a better sword and more powerful magic for Cloud Strife, you're competing in numerous races to earn enough money to buy a better set of wheels and a more powerful engine for a Lotus Esprit. There's no coincidence that *Gran Turismo* hails from the land of the RPG and if you happen to be playing the role of a cool automobile rather than a spikey-haired warrior with an attitude problem, then all the better we say.

//The progression system is so expansive it's almost like the structure of an RPG//

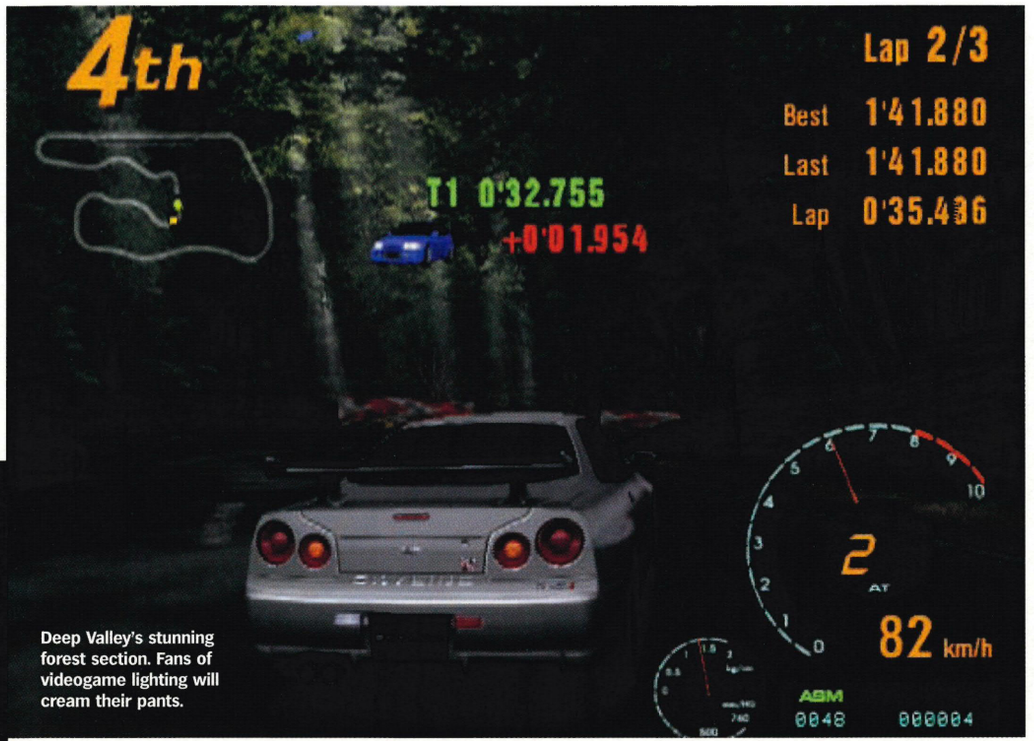
Up to now we've only had a constant cascade of praise for *Gran Turismo 3* but the game isn't totally flawless. While its predecessors were always miles ahead of the videogame pack in terms of racing technology, there are a couple of areas where *GT3* isn't as advanced as we might have hoped. Namely, damage and artificial intelligence.

Although it's billed as the 'Real Driving Simulator', the lack of vehicle damage in the game negates this claim to a degree. On the surface it's easy to say, 'Who cares if you don't have vehicle parts smashing off and the electrics failing at the end of a torrid race? It doesn't really affect the gameplay'. But damage isn't just a cosmetic issue, it's integral to the whole essence of *Gran Turismo*.

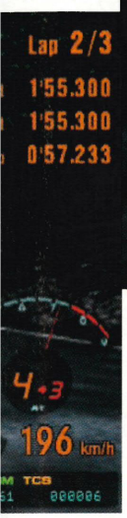
While the game is the epitome of realism in every other department, you can get away with driving like an absolute lunatic and the worst thing that can happen is that you finish in sixth place. More often than not, reckless driving even rewards you, as instead of slowing down for corners it can be more productive to smash into barriers or opposition cars and simply bounce off them with only a slight reduction in speed.

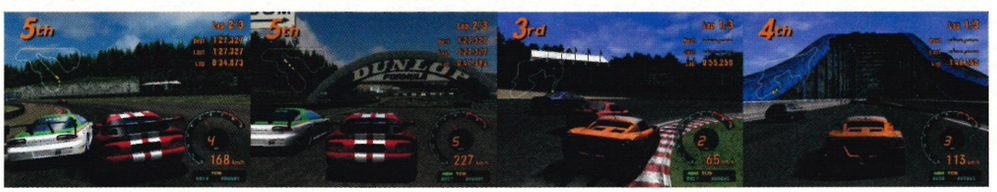


The TVR Cerbera. Easily the sexiest thing to come out of Blackpool since Lenny Bennett.



Deep Valley's stunning forest section. Fans of videogame lighting will cream their pants.





The Viper GTS-R in all its impossible-to-control glory.

Whereas, in contrast, the Speedster is a breeze to drive.

DAMAGE LIMITATION

The absence of damage could easily be forgiven in the two previous games but acceptance is a bit more grudging now that the visuals are so staggeringly realistic – making it stand out like a sore thumb when you hit a barrier full on at 200mph and drive away without even a dent. To be fair, this situation isn't entirely Polyphony Digital's fault (indeed, *GT* creator Kazunori Yamauchi would love to include a damage feature), it's the car manufacturer's which are unwilling to let their babies be crashed to pieces by reckless videogame drivers. But considering the massive sales of the *GT* series and the ideal marketing opportunity it represents for vehicles featured in the games, Polyphony is in a strong bargaining position and it's about time the developer put its foot down on this matter. It may be too late for this third instalment but damage would certainly add an extra dimension to the inevitable *Gran Turismo 4* waiting in the garage.

GT3's other weak point, artificial intelligence, is a far more serious issue and in this department the series is in definite need of an MOT. Opposition cars still appear to drive to a pre-set routine: one shoots to the front, another hangs around on your tail, the remaining three drive together as a pack. And while this makes for close, competitive racing it's far too predictable compared to the AI on show in the likes of *TOCA World Touring Cars*, *Metropolis Street Racer* and *Colin McRae Rally 2*.

In these games the computer cars genuinely appear to react to the way you drive: anticipating your approach to corners; blocking predictable overtaking manoeuvres; responding in kind to any rough stuff and even embarking on vendettas and attempting to barge you off the track if you've previously done the same to them. This is entirely convincing AI which feels as if you're playing against aggressive, vindictive human opponents rather than mere computer code. For all their merits, *GT3's* AI routines don't appear to have changed a great deal from those seen in the previous games and it's a great shame they haven't been brought bang up to date.

The lack of true innovation, vehicle damage and ground-breaking AI mean *GT3* just misses out on the coveted perfect 10 rating, but this certainly shouldn't put off potential buyers. *Gran Turismo 3: A-spec* is the best game on PlayStation 2, the best driving game currently available for any machine and an essential purchase for anyone who likes racing cars at illegal speeds.

The realism factor may be a big selling point but *GT3* quite rightly favours fun over simulation and this is ultimately why it's such a joy to play. It's the killer app we all anticipated it would be and for anyone still to be convinced of the PS2's merits, a few laps behind the wheel of this classic racer will be like driving on the road to Damascus. As we said right at the beginning, you need to own this game. ☐ **Lee Hart**

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	A lengthy probe under its bonnet has left us with no doubt that *GT3* is the greatest driving game in the world. A must-buy for every PS2 owner.
- Plays amazing, looks amazing, sounds amazing, is amazing - The best handling, tracks and cars of any racing game	- The artificial intelligence is showing its age - Still no vehicle damage - Only the visuals represent a giant leap forward from *GT2*	

Graphics	Just look at those screenshots!	10
Sound	Decent music, totally realistic vehicle fx	09
Gameplay	The best driving simulation ever made	09
Life span	You could play the GT mode for months	10

09

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

GT3: A-SPEC: THE GARAGE

No	Manufacturer	Car Name	Grade	Year
1	Daihatsu	Storia	X4	1998
2	Daihatsu	Mira	TR-XX Avanzato R	1997
3	Honda	Accord	Euro-R	2000
4	Honda	Raybryg NSX		2000
5	Honda	Castrol Mugen NSX		2000
6	Honda	Arta NSX		2000
7	Honda	NSX	Type S Zero	1997
8	Honda	NSX	Type R	1992
9	Honda	S2000	Type V	2000
10	Honda	S2000		1999
11	Honda	Integra	Type R 98 Spec	1998
12	Honda	Civic	Type R (EK)	1998
13	Honda	Civic	SIR-II (EG)	1993
14	Honda	CR-X Del-Sol	SiR	1995
15	Tickford	Falcon XR8	Race Car	2000
16	Mazda	RX-7	Type RS	1998
17	Mazda	RX-7	Type RZ	2000
18	Mazda	Savanna RX-7	Infini III (FC)	1990
19	Mazda	Eunos Roadster	Normal	1989
20	Mazda	Eunos Roadster	Normal	1993
21	Mazda	Roadster	1.8 RS	1998
22	Mazda	Roadster	RS	2000
23	Mazda	Demio	GL-X	1999
24	Mitsubishi	FTO	GP Version R	1997
25	Mitsubishi	GTO	Twin Turbo	1995
26	Mitsubishi	GTO	Twin Turbo	1999
27	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution IV GSR	1996
28	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution V GSR	1998
29	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution VI GSR	1999
30	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution VI GSR Tommi Makinen Edition	2000
31	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution VI GSR (Stripe) Tommi Makinen Edition	2000
32	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution VI Rally Car	1999
33	Mitsubishi	Lancer	Evolution VII GSR	
34	Nissan	Silvia Varletta		2000
35	Nissan	Skyline	GTS-t Type M (R32)	1991
36	Nissan	Skyline	GT-R V-Spec II (R32)	1994
37	Nissan	Skyline	GT-R V-Spec (R33)	1997
38	Nissan	R390 GT1	LM Race Car	1998
39	Nissan	R390 GT1	Road Car	1998
40	Nissan	Skyline	GT-R V-Spec (R34)	1999
41	Nissan	Skyline	GT-R V-Spec II (R34)	2000
42	Nissan	Pennzoil Nismo GT-R	GT	1999
43	Nissan	Silvia	K's 2000cc (S13)	1991
44	Nissan	Silvia	K's 1800cc (S13)	1988
45	Nissan	Silvia	K's Aero (S14)	1996
46	Nissan	Silvia	Spec R (S15)	1999
47	Nissan	180SX	Type X	1996
48	Nissan	Loctite Zexel	GT	2000
49	Nissan	Calsonic Skyline	GT	2000
50	Nissan	Fairlady Z	Version S2 seater Twin Turbo	1998
51	Subaru	Impreza	WRX STI	2000
52	Subaru	Impreza	Sports Wagon STI	2000
53	Subaru	Impreza	Rally Car	1999
54	Subaru	Impreza	Coupe 22B STI Version	1998
55	Subaru	Impreza	Sedan WRX STI Version VI	1999
56	Subaru	Impreza	WAGON WRX STI Version VI	1999
57	Subaru	Impreza	Rally Car Prototype	2001
58	Subaru	Legacy B4	RSK	1998
59	Subaru	Legacy B4	Blitzen	2000
60	Subaru	Legacy	Touring Wagon GT-B	1996
61	Suzuki	Alto Works	Suzuki Sports Limited	1997
62	Tommykaira	ZZS		1999
63	Toyota	MR2	GT-S	1998
64	Toyota	MR2	G-Limited	1998
65	Toyota	Corolla	Rally Car	1999
66	Toyota	Sprinter Trueno	GT-APEX (AE86 Type I)	1985
67	Toyota	Sprinter Trueno	GT-APEX (Shigeno Version)	1985
68	Toyota	MR-S	S Edition	1999
69	Toyota	Autobacs Apex MR-S	GT	2000
70	Toyota	Celica	SS-II	1999
71	Toyota	Supra	RZ	1997
72	Toyota	Supra	SZ-R	1997
73	Toyota	Castrol Tom's Supra		2000
74	Toyota	Denso Sard Supra		2000
75	Toyota	Altezza	RS200	1998
76	Toyota	Altezza	AS200	1998
77	Toyota	GT-One (TS020)	Race Car	1999
78	Toyota	GT-One (TS020)	Road Car	1999
79	Toyota	Vitz	Euro Edition	2000
80	Toyota	Vitz	RS 1.5	2000
81	Toyota	Celica	GT-Four (ST205)	1995
82	Acura	CL	3.2 Type S	2000
83	Acura	NSX		1993
84	Acura	NSX		1997
85	Acura	Integra	Type R	1996
86	Chevrolet	Corvette	Grand Sport	1996
87	Chevrolet	Camaro	Z28	1997
88	Chevrolet	Corvette	Z06	2000
89	Chevrolet	Camaro	SS	2000
90	Chevrolet	Corvette	C5R	2000
91	Chrysler	PT Cruiser		2000
92	Dodge	Viper	GTS-R Team Oreca	2000
93	Dodge	Viper	GTS	1998
94	Ford	Focus	Rally Car	1998
95	Ford	Escort	Rally Car	1998
96	Ford	Mustang	SVT Cobra R	2000
97	Ford	GT40	Race Car	1969
98	Ford	GT40		1966
99	Panoz	Esperante GTR-1	Race Car	1997
100	Shelby	Cobra		1967
101	Audi	S4		1999
102	Audi	TT	1.8T Quattro	2000
103	BMW	328ci		1999
104	Mercedes-Benz	CLK55		2000
105	Mercedes-Benz	CL600		2000
106	Mercedes-Benz	SLK	230 Kompressor	1999
107	RUF	RUF 3400S		2000
108	RUF	RUF R-GT		2000
109	RUF	RUF CTR2		1996
110	Volkswagen	New Beetle	2.0	2000
111	Volkswagen	New Beetle	RSI	2000
112	Volkswagen	Lupo	Cup Car	2000
113	Volkswagen	New Beetle	Cup Car	2000
114	Citroen	Xsara	Rally Car	1999
115	Peugeot	206	S16	1999
116	Peugeot	206	Rally Car	1999
117	Renault	Clio Sport	V6 24V	2000
118	Renault	Clio Sport	Race Car	2000
119	Alfa Romeo	156	Super Turismo	2000
120	Alfa Romeo	156	2.5 V6 24V	1999
121	Fiat	Coupe	Turbo Plus	2000
122	Pagani	Zonda	C12	2000
123	Pagani	Zonda	C12S	2000
124	Aston Martin	DB7	Vantage Coupe	2000
125	Aston Martin	V8 Vantage		1997
126	Jaguar	XJ220	Road Car	1992
127	Jaguar	XKR	Coupe	1999
128	Lister	Storm V12	Race Car	1999
129	Lotus	Esprit	SPORT 350	2000
130	Lotus	Elise	190	1998
131	Lotus	Motor Sport Elise		1999
132	Vauxhall	Astra	DTM Team Phoenix	2000
133	Vauxhall	Speedster VX220		2000
134	Vauxhall	Calibra	DTM	1995
135	TVR	Tuscan	Speed 6	2000
136	TVR	Griffith	500	1998
137	TVR	Speed 12		2000
138	Gillet	Vertigo	Race Car	1997

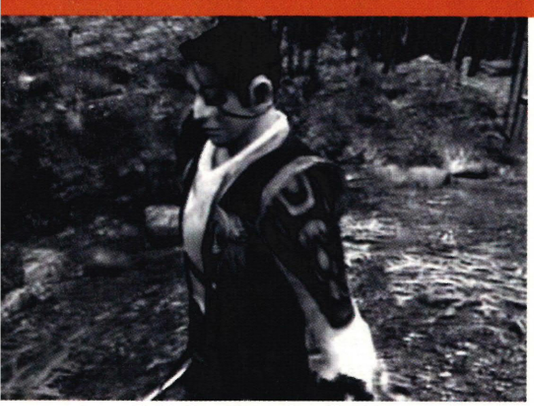
**138 cars named and only 12 to go... Despite our requests, Kazunori Yamauchi wants the other dozen kept under wraps. Don't mention the Formula One cars!*

"And that's for stealing my girlfriend, with your fancy hats!"

ON THE DVD

ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS

Survival horror's done mutating viruses and rampaging dinosaurs. With *Onimusha* it finally goes to hell.



Finish the game and you'll get to see a wee taster of *Onimusha 2*. But who's the new hero?

Publisher: Capcom Eurosoft
Developer: Capcom
Players: 1
Out: Now
Web site: www.capcom.co.jp/newproducts/consumer/onimusha/index.html

Back story
Originally conceived as an N64 title *Onimusha*'s platform of choice switched to the PSone early on in the game's development. That is until a PS2 dev kit landed on the Capcom corporate doormat with a portentous thump. The rest, as they say, is gorgeously rendered, feudal Japanese history.

When reports of the PS2's big launch in Japan hit our TV screens here in Blighty there was one shot that cut through the media hoopla and soundbite confusion, giving even the console illiterates of this world a mainline to the fascination directed at the new machine. It showed crowds of people blocking a Tokyo street, transfixed by the images playing on a giant, building mounted video screen. The images were from an upcoming PS2 game, but curiously enough they weren't from high profile launch titles like *Tekken Tag Tournament* or *Ridge Racer V*. The sequence seized as gape-mouthed proof of the new console's power and potential was the opening movie from an historical horror game called *Onimusha: Warlords*.

Over a year later and finally, the long anticipated addition to Capcom's survival horror family has made it to our shores, with Japanese game bible *Famitsu*'s rare Platinum award and a million plus sales in its hand luggage to boot. So on face value it's looking good for shock hungry gamers. But is there an evolution in gameplay to match those next-gen visuals or is *Onimusha* all smoke and magic mirrors?

The answer is a resounding (though far from soundbite friendly) 'no' to both parts. Visually, Capcom has made a game that deserves to be up there with the *GT3* and *Metal Gear Solid 2*s of this world – it really does look that good. And beneath it there is a solid game that has a lot to recommend it. The first three *Resident Evil* games for one thing. And therein lies the potential sand in the sushi. But we'll come to that later. What is the game all about?

Bolting from the trend of survival horror games to set themselves in tech/sci-fi rich, near-future environments, *Onimusha* (which translates roughly as 'warrior as strong as demons') takes an episode from Japanese history, mutating it and its leading players for a darker purpose. (Not unlike recent Japanese school textbooks in that respect.) The period in question is the 16th Century and the main historical figure one Lord Nobunaga Oda. In reality Nobunaga rose to power and rule thanks in part to early firearms brought to Japan by 'foreign devils' from Europe. In the game, the devils

DEMON IN THE STREETS

Your handy slash-out-and-keep guide to *Onimusha: Warlords'* undead legions.

SOLDIER DEMON
Distinguishing marks Coolie hat, rotting flesh and large numbers.
Attack style Shambling with the occasional half-hearted charge.
How to kill Plough in and take 'em out.

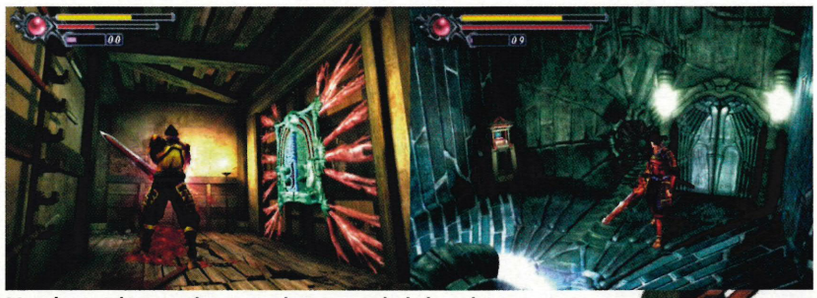
THREE EYES
Distinguishing marks Are you kidding?
Attack style Outflanking you with lightning speed.
How to kill Sidestep and then slash.

LONG ARMS
Distinguishing marks Very tall. Oh, and quite lanky.
Attack style Attacks from a distance.
How to kill Magic attack or dart in, attack, retreat and repeat.

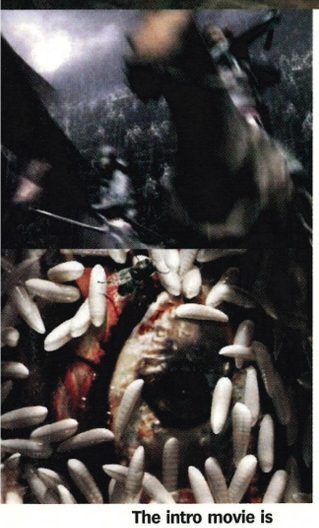
GYARAN
Distinguishing marks A large, gaseous squash ball. Made up from skulls.
Attack style Floats on high then lunges.
How to kill Wait until it swoops then stab it til it bursts.

BAZU
Distinguishing marks Reptile-like appearance.
Attack style Likes to roll up into a ball and play skittles with you.
How to kill Dodge the attack, then turn and Combo attack.

BARABAZU
Distinguishing marks Bazu's big brother.
Attack style Slow but sure twatting with an extremely large axe.
How to kill Magic attack, magic attack.



It's going to take more than a coat hanger to unlock them doors.



The intro movie is almost worth the entry fee on its own.

//Visually, Capcom has made a game that deserves to be up there with *GT3* and *MGS2*//

are of a more literal kind, with Nobunaga maintaining power at the head of a demonic army. Firmly in gameland now he kidnaps the daughter of a former rival, and it's up to a Samurai called Samanosuke, aided by a female ninja (Kaede) to rescue her from the tyrant's castle. That's where you come in.

Nobunaga's castle is positively crawling with demons intent on snuffing out all human life. And given the enormous number of bloody corpses littering the place when you arrive, it's a safe bet they've been getting a lot of practice in just ready for your entrance. The underworld is represented by a wide range of imaginative, undead nasties, from the basic, coolie hat sporting, decomposing foot soldiers of the damned via tentacle armed Reynaldos through to the frankly bowel loosening

REYNALDO
Distinguishing marks Tentacle arms the shade of economy sausages.
Attack style Sends tentacles under ground to attack from beneath.
How to kill Rush in and deliver pointy justice.

VOLCHIMAN
Distinguishing marks Speed and partial invisibility.
Attack style Disappears only to re-appear with his blade in your kidneys.
How to kill Keep blocking until he begins to disappear. Then attack.

SPIDER
Distinguishing marks Doesn't cut his nails.
Attack style Almost too fast for the human eye.
How to kill Get stuck in before he starts speeding around too much.

SHARKS
Distinguishing marks Look like the arachnids from *Starship Troopers*.
Attack style Overwhelms with numbers.
How to kill Make some distance, then take out the lot with Wind attack.

Samonosuke. Samurai. Lover. Panda impersonator. Bear with us on that last one.

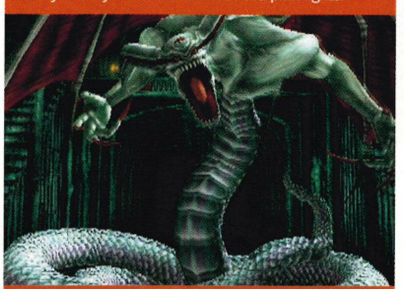
I AM FORTINBRAS

Make your way to the final showdown and you'll have to tackle the King of Demons himself. Fortinbras may stand on the spot, but with attacks like these running rings around him was never going to be easy.

1. Evil Eye. Fortinbras shoots rays of pure energy across the floor. Time to use those dancing feet.

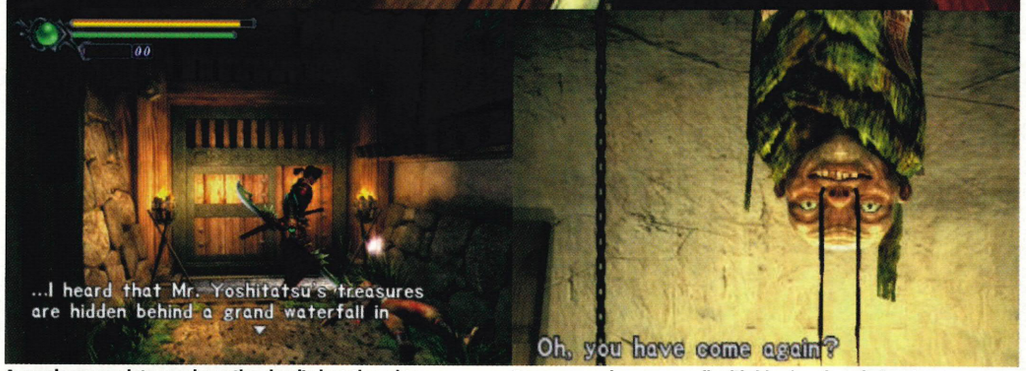
2. Halitosis Of Doom. It's going to take more than a mint to freshen this firey breath.

3. Disco Lights Of Despair. Bolts of lightning to ruin your day. Don't stand under the pink lights.



4. The Back Of My Hand. Doesn't sound scary? There's half your life bar gone then you little tyke.

If you think three levers can't do any harm just try pulling the wrong one.



A magic rosary lets you hear the dead's last thoughts.

Cocoonman impresses all with his shoe lace balancing...

Special attacks are sweet to the eye, but deadly to whoever stands in the way.

Barabazu who looks like he sounds. Only bigger and with an axe. Each class of demon has its own special attacks and weaknesses (see Demons in the Streets). Thankfully Samanosuke and Kaede have a little more in their arsenal than good looks and harsh language. Kaede (on the two brief occasions you get to control her) partners her excellent demon sidestepping agility with a knife and throwing blades. But it's as Samanosuke you'll get the lion's share of the action and the goodies to help you through it. Although you start the game wielding a regular sword you soon take possession of a magic gauntlet and a trio of supernatural blades. Each weapon and its accompanying orb is represented by an elemental force (thunder, fire and wind) and when powered up can unleash a crippling, long-range attack. Where *Onimusha* does itself a big favour is the way it allows you to charge up your weapons.

SOUL FOOD

Every time you kill an enemy its soul is released into the air. As Samanosuke you can absorb these spirits into your gauntlet and use them in one of three ways. Yellow souls boost your vitality, and as such are few and far between. Blue souls increase your weapons' special attack bar. But most frequent of all are red souls. These come into their own at shrine-like doohickies called magic mirrors that are dotted around Nobunaga's castle. Magic mirrors have two functions. First of all they act as game save points. Their second use is to enhance your special weapons and orbs, each of which have three increasingly powerful forms. And the currency of change is those red souls. Also, what works for a wind orb will also turn herbs into medicine, arrows into fire arrows and matchlock bullets (yes, there is *one* gun on offer here) into burst bullets.

//Visually, *Onimusha* does look very much like *Resi Evil: The Slash-'Em-Up Years*//

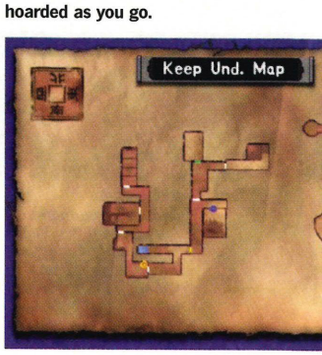
The soul trader element of the game is key to its enjoyment and helps to shift the emphasis of gameplay from the conserve-and-elude cautiousness of survival horror games like *Resi Evil* to a decidedly more action friendly experience. So much so, that far from trying to avoid demons, you'll often find yourself looking for a fight or six, just so you can max out an item in your inventory. This is never more true than with the orbs. Certain doors in the castle have demonic locks on them which can only be neutralised by the right orb with the correct rating. Max up your fire orb at the expense of the thunder and you may have to do some serious soul searching before you can progress. It's a good system that gives a thoughtful nod to RPG complexity without getting bogged down with experience points and the like.

FINGER ON THE BUTTON

In a game with so much fighting, an intuitive control system is essential. *Onimusha*'s is pared down for ease of use, but almost ends up being too simple. Aside from the 'special attack', 'block' and 'target nearest enemy' controls there is just one button that covers all other attacking moves. Multiple presses will result in a combo and combining attacks with the D-pad triggers different moves. And yet in the heat of battle, you'll often find yourself riding the target button (R1) and hammering away at 'attack' (○) with a little too much success. Add to this the fact that you

Samanosuke is modelled on actor and heart-throb Takeshi Kaneshiro.

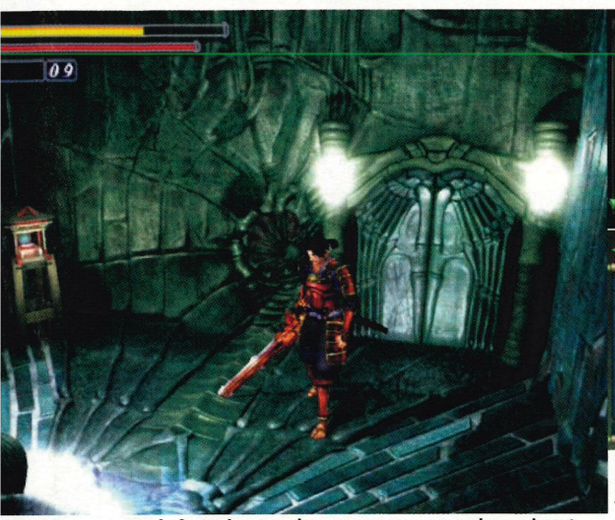
Maps for individual levels need to be hoarded as you go.



***Onimusha* doesn't flinch from gore. Take this demon finishing stab to the ribs.**

Looks like a fair fight? Don't bank on the other human's help for long...

Fact: Wind attack has nothing to do dutch ovens.



Magic fountains can give your weapons a welcome boost.

Items and texts have their uses, but none of them get in the way of the flowing gameplay.

can block the vast majority of enemy attacks from foot soldier to end of level boss, and it's unlikely that you'll be forced to use that last save point much before the final confrontation.

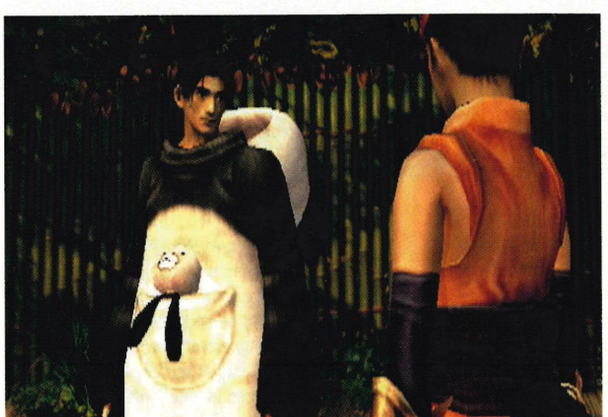
Aside from scrapping with citizens of the netherworld Capcom has sprinkled your hero's progress with a collection of depth enhancing puzzles, hidden texts and items. The books and manuscripts are a mixture of plot glimpses, and coded texts that when pieced together help to unlock chests containing useful items or weapons. Puzzles range from combination locked boxes to elaborate traps with sequenced disarming mechanisms. However simple or infuriating, speed is essential in solving nearly all of them and they help rather than hinder the game's pace never outstaying their welcome.

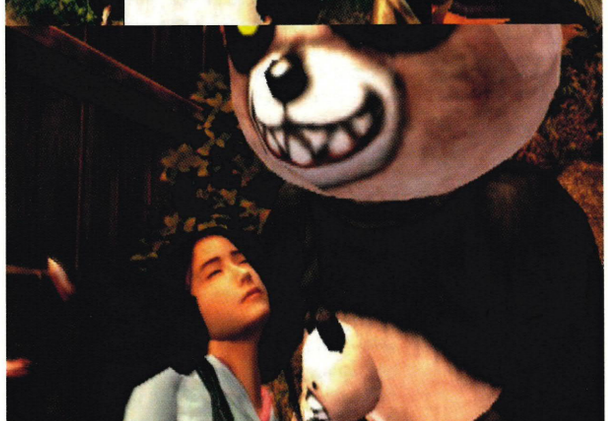
THE DEVIL IN THE DETAIL

With its cinematic, fixed camera points and pre-rendered backgrounds *Onimusha* does look very much like *Resident Evil: The Slash-'Em-Up Years*. The backgrounds are beautifully drawn (especially given the PS2's raw processing power) but interaction with them is strictly limited. Although the fixed cameras do add to the creepy atmosphere, they are frustratingly positioned sometimes. When you've run around a blind corner and straight into the boomerang blade of a Volchiman for the fourth time you'll know just how frustrating this can be. It's not that these factors ruined the *Resi Evil* games, that's self evident. But if ever there was a perfect opportunity to address them, the launch of a new franchise on a new platform was it.

That said, *Onimusha* does look fantastic. Character animations are convincing and the facial expressions of the human cast are sublime. Not only that, the characters' bodies move in a way that suggests real weight. Small details – but so important to immersion in this or any game. When they occur, background animations too are stunning. Koi carp move away from Samanosuke's feet as he walks on the edge of a lake, fire flies dart about the night sky and rats scurry along rafters. Lighting is excellent and environmental effects like mist, smoke and water have never looked so realistic. And as for the FMV cut scenes? The opening movie that wowed the Japanese a year ago was no fluke. With an average completion time of only six hours *Onimusha* may be short, but the quality of the experience is such that once you've battled your way to the credits, it's unlikely it'll stay on your shelf for long.

It may seem harsh to criticise *Onimusha* for being like its massively successful *Resident Evil* cousins. However, if it hadn't raised the stakes so high with its stunning graphics and added new elements to its gameplay, the game probably wouldn't have impressed quite as much. As it stands it's still one of the best next generation games out there at the moment, and the best action adventure for PS2 yet. *Code: Veronica X*? Your move. ☐ **Paul Fitzpatrick**





ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	*Onimusha* really lets the PS2 show off what it can do but its gameplay doesn't feel as fresh as it should. An impressive PS2 debut for survival horror nevertheless.
- Fantastic visuals - Incorporates new gameplay elements - Great level design	- Too much reliance on *Resi Evil* conventions - Not actually that frightening - Too short for hardcore gamers	

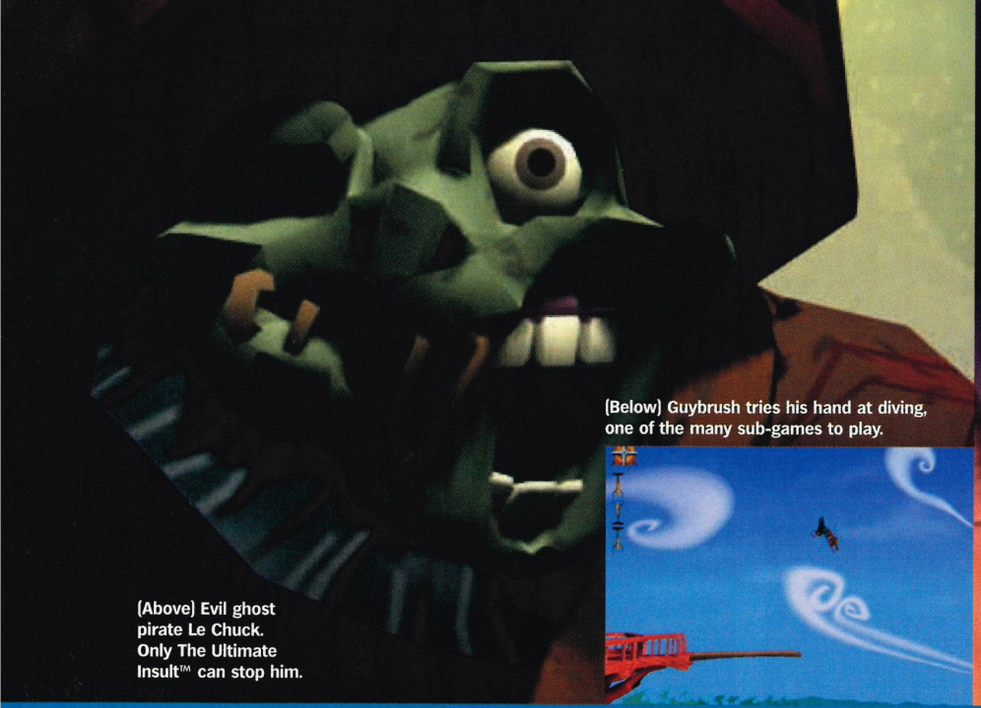
Graphics	Few games can match this quality and detail	09
Sound	Atmospheric effects and superb score	08
Gameplay	Totally engaging but not ground-breaking	07
Life span	Not a huge game, but quality while it lasts	07

08

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

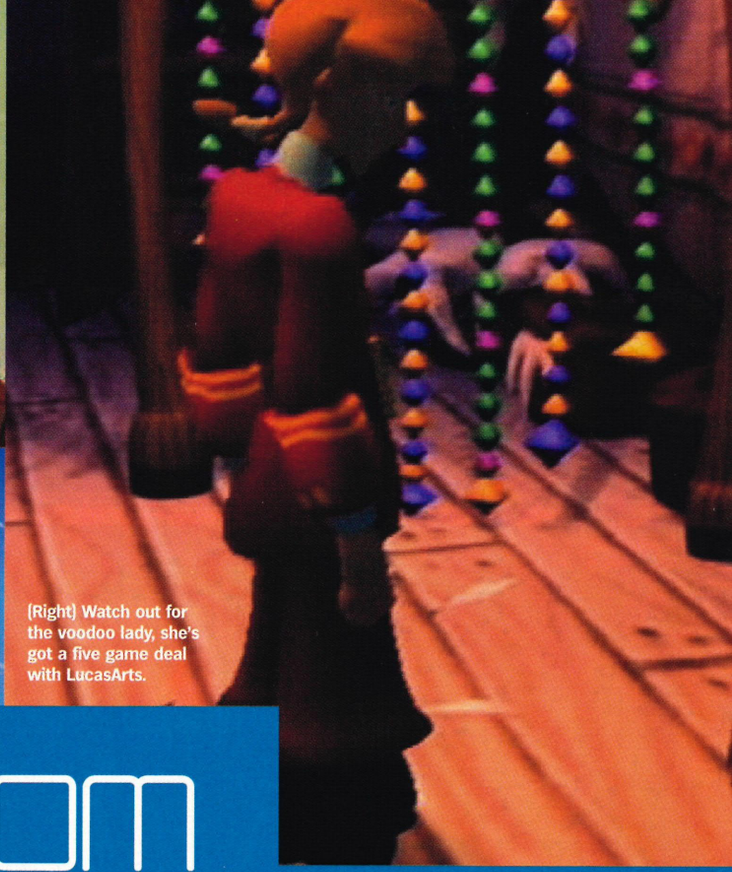
SAVE THE PANDA

Complete *Onimusha* and win a cuddly toy! Well, not exactly. However, you do get to play as Samanosuke in a Panda costume complete with ickle baby panda clapping its paws in your front pocket. Aww, ain't he just the cutest!? And then there's the trailer for something called *Onimusha 2*...



(Above) Evil ghost pirate Le Chuck. Only The Ultimate Insult™ can stop him.

(Below) Guybrush tries his hand at diving, one of the many sub-games to play.



(Right) Watch out for the voodoo lady, she's got a five game deal with LucasArts.

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND

Primates and pirates are a classic paring, nowhere more appropriate than in LucasArts' latest adventurer.

Publisher: Activision
Developer: LucasArts
Price: £39.99
Players: One
Out: July
Website: www.lucasarts.com/products/monkey4/

Back story

The fourth *Monkey Island* game and the first one in full 3D, *Escape* was released last year on PC to critical acclaim but a mixed response from hardcore PC fans raised on 2D adventuring. *Escape* is the first LucasArts adventure to be released on console – we can largely thank DVD for that. Now read our exclusive review.

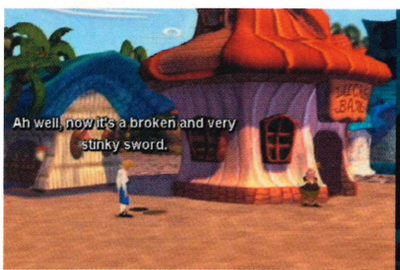
Escape From Monkey Island is a game PC owners have been able to play exclusively for the last six months, huddled behind their monitors giggling in luck-fuelled smugness at their licence-restricted good fortune. Well, crap in our crow's nest, not for much longer, because (muted fanfare, leaping furry teddybear creatures and frantic whistle-like bleeping) this is the first LucasArts' adventure ever to grace a console and what a breath of fresh air it is too. There's no fighting, no big weapons, and your character simply won't die. So where's the fun in that? Entertainment oozes from a brilliantly witty script and puzzles so devious, they make the *Times*' crossword look like the two times table.

The story follows one Guybrush Treepwood, mighty pirate and a bit of a blundering fool. He's weedy and geeky – not the stuff of your usual videogames hero. Guybrush won't uses violence to triumph, insists on having a darned good time while triumphing and getting the girl is his number one priority. At this stage in the review a recap of his previous antics is essential. If your familiar with the series we'll meet you at the start of the following paragraph. In the previous *Monkey Island* episode Guybrush marries the love of his life Elaine Marley, Governor of Melee Island. Returning from their honeymoon they discover they've been declared lost at sea and an election is in full swing to find a new Governor. The only candidate is a certain Charles L Charles who's name is suspiciously similar to Guybrush's arch enemy and rival for Elaine's hand, the evil ghost pirate (forever out to off them both) Le Chuck. And he's offering free grog and 'good times' for all. How can Elaine regain her seat of power? What follows is an adventure of twists, turns, mirth and merriment featuring among other strange things, the second-largest monkey head you'll ever see. Result.

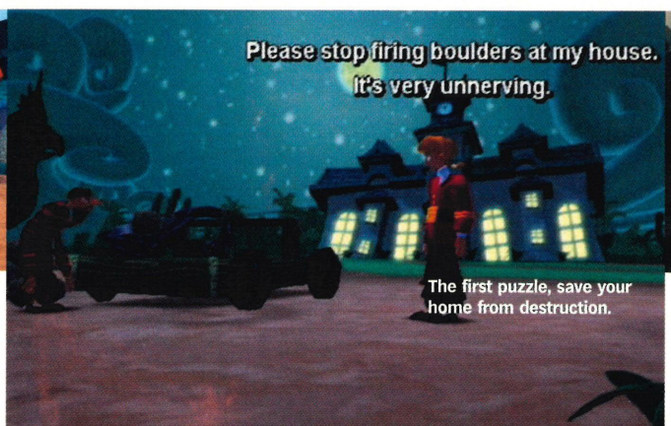
LATERALLY SPEAKING

Great, nice to see you again. Thanks for waiting. Due to adventure games being thin on the ground on PS2, the gameplay may seem unfamiliar, however the basic premise is simple enough. In following given objectives and searching for objects you talk to various characters, discovering further clues in the process with which to puzzle solve

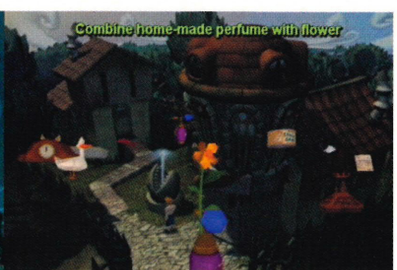
Which is where we proudly present the 'More fun than a barrel full of monkeys' caption!



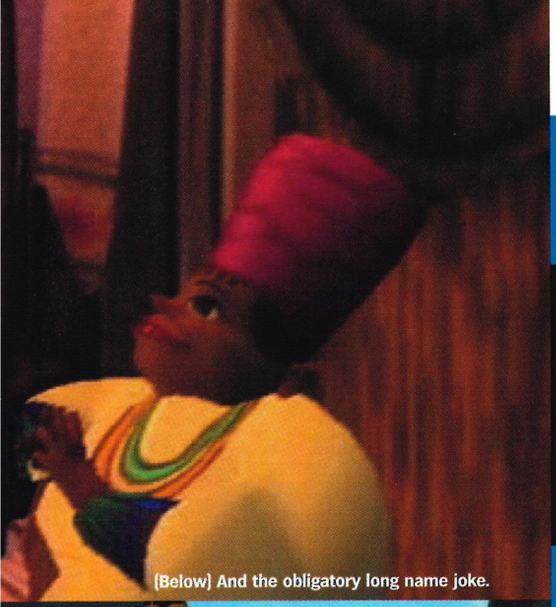
There's even time to have a sly dig at a certain PSone adventure game.



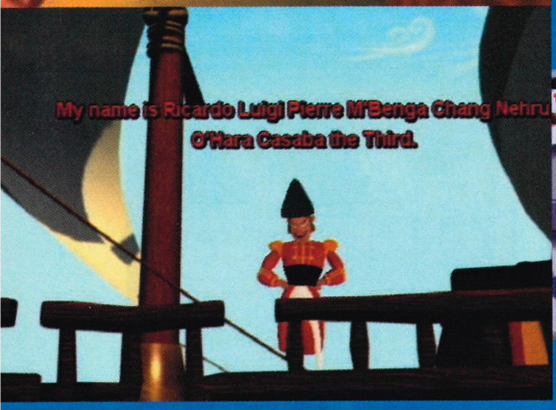
The first puzzle, save your home from destruction.



Some puzzles require you to combine objects. Don't expect it to be obvious, though.



(Below) And the obligatory long name joke.



MOST WANTED. DEAD OR ALIVE!

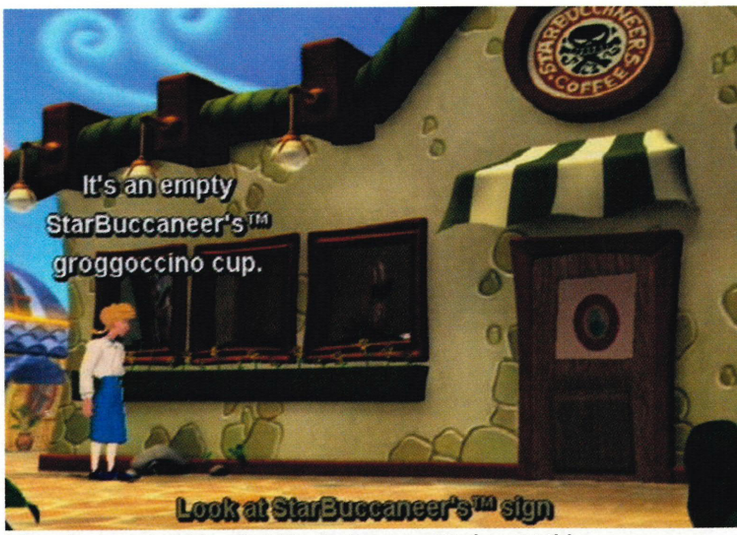
The LucasArts' adventures we wish would come to the PS2 with a hi-resolution makeover.

Grim Fandango
Already sporting 3D, so it wouldn't be an impossible task to convert to PS2. This is a brilliantly funny film noir adventure based on Mexican folklore (hence the presence of the skeletons). LucasArts' best yet.

Day Of The Tentacle
A giant purple tentacle threatens to take on the world in this time travelling adventure, spanning 400 years. One of the most complicated adventures ever.

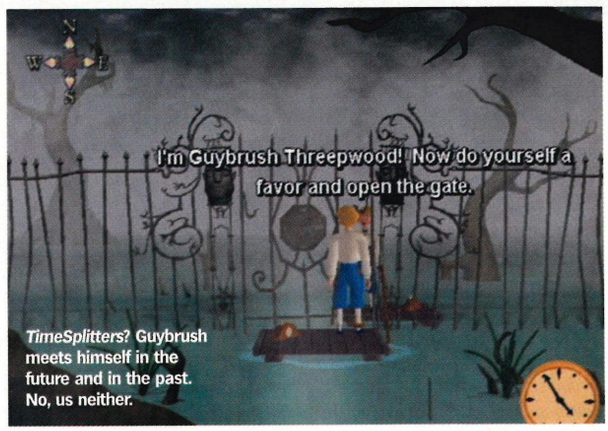
Sam and Max Hit The Road
Based on the cult graphic novel and animation, Sam and Max are two detectives (one rabbit, one dog) and you're on the fetid trail of Bruno the Sasquatch.

Full Throttle
A kind of mix between *Mad Max* and *Easy Rider*, here you play Ben, framed for murder and on the run from the law. On a whopping great hog of a bike.



Where does a pirate drink coffee? Why, StarBuccaneer's™ of course! Sigh.

"Brass monkey/That funky monkey!" An cutesy Beastie Boys reference.



TimeSplitters? Guybrush meets himself in the future and in the past. No, us neither.

//Picture camp pirates, a talking skull hell-bent on world destruction and a voodoo lady...//

using each of the uncovered objects. *Escape* could easily have been a simple case of carrying one object to one location and using it, and although this happens on occasions, most of the puzzles require plenty of lateral thinking to solve. A number of mini-games also breaks up the action, and while still being variations on basic puzzles, adds some welcome variety to all the leg work. Insult Arm Wrestling (pick the correct comebacks to insults to win) and our favourite *Monkey Kombat* (a tongue in cheek version of a certain beat-'em-up) are just two of the many highlights.

To begin with, most puzzles will have you tearing your hair out, so pay close attention to the clues and think as laterally as possible, you'll soon develop the appropriate mindset. Lack of progress is hardly ever down to the obscurity of the puzzles, as was the case with some of the previous games, but rather down to the player not really paying attention. And of course when you do solve that one annoying puzzle that has been bugging you for an hour, the sense of achievement verges on a rush of religiously overwhelming proportions.

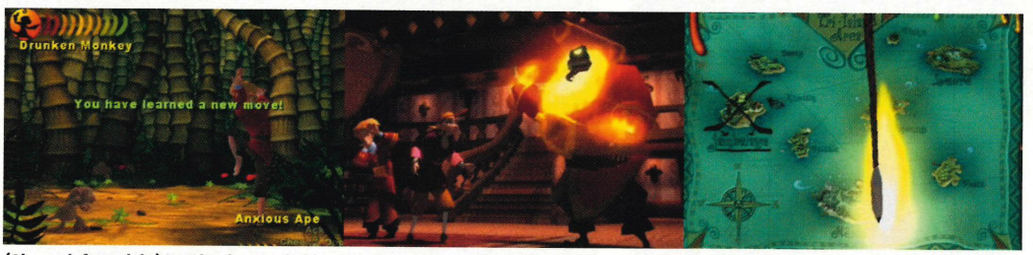
REALITY CHECKS

Part of *Escape*'s success lies in the believability of the world it creates. Characters are exactly that – characters. Absent too are clichéd swashbuckling types. Picture camp perfume-selling pirates, a talking skull hell-bent on world destruction and a voodoo lady brandishing an exclusive five game deal with LucasArts – every one a winner. You can quite happily immerse yourself in this world chatting to the inhabitants about all manner of things (although not always relevant to the plot) but it's chucklesome stuff also making a pleasant break from the current task in hand.

And this being LucasArts, there are plenty of *Star Wars* and popular culture references tightly knitted into the fabric including a bizarre Beastie Boys nod and more pirate jokes than you could

Guybrush Treepwood – self-proclaimed 'mighty pirate' but a bit of a tool, if truth be told...

Guybrush's ship reveals its secret – a spooky figurehead with a Memphis drawl and an attitood.



(Above, left to right) Le Chuck reveals himself and a flaming pen shows Guybrush exactly where to find The Ultimate Insult™.

shake a pair of crossbones at. For example. Where does a pirate go for coffee? Why, Starbuccaneers™, of course. There's a sense of humour at work here which rejoices in silliness, obvious puns and the just plain daft. It all works wonderfully.

Still, if anything has to come under critical fire then it's the control system. The PC version uses one similar to *Resident Evil* – turning the character with ← and → and walking forwards with ↑. The PS2 version moves Guybrush relative to the camera by using the analogue stick. So, you may find yourself pressing down to move from one location as the view flips to another screen where down (the direction you're still pressing) takes you back to where you've just come from. What can follow is a confusing flicking between each location as you try and suss out what's going on. This is immensely infuriating to begin with, however letting go of the analogue stick while moving from screen to screen soon becomes instinctive. It's a good job you're not on the run from a mob of blood-lusting zombies.

BIG SCREEN DELIGHTS

Just being able to play this sumptuous visual feast on a large-screen TV is an enormous bonus. All the 3D rendered locations are lovingly crafted and look like they're hand-painted, as are the characters which, with some excellent voice acting and animation, really do come to life. It all adds-up to create a brilliant-looking, believable world.

Escape From Monkey Island is a terrific example of how good adventure gaming can be, proving they don't have to be populated by dwarves, goblins and wizards or involve you walking north to find yourself in an open grassy field with exits to the east and west. They can be funny, intelligent and absorbing and be bursting with an originality which drags you back time and time again even when there's one puzzle you just can't solve. Some might say the golden age of adventuring is coming to an end, but with quality games like this coming to PS2, it can only be the beginning. If this is how LucasArts can convert its classic adventures to console, then bring 'em all on. Now, *Grim Fandango* is excellent, but does it have drunken monkeys in it... ☐ **Nick Jones**

//A sense of humour is at work here rejoicing in silliness, obvious puns and the just plain daft//

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND

Why we'd buy it:	**Why we'd leave it:**	**Smart visuals, a witty script and ace puzzling. Not LucasArts' most accomplished adventure, but it's still right up there with the best of 'em.**
- It be funny - Engages the brain from start to finish - There's a whopping great robot monkey	- Glitchy control system - You don't like monkeys - You still don't like monkeys	

Graphics	Painterly backgrounds and brilliantly animation	08
Sound	Superb voice acting and effects	09
Gameplay	Fiendishly clever puzzles	08
Life span	You'll be scratching your head for weeks	07

08

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Q&A

ARTS & CRAFTS

LucasArts' International lead tester Eric Elacock on *Monkey Island*, sequels and er, *Star Wars*...

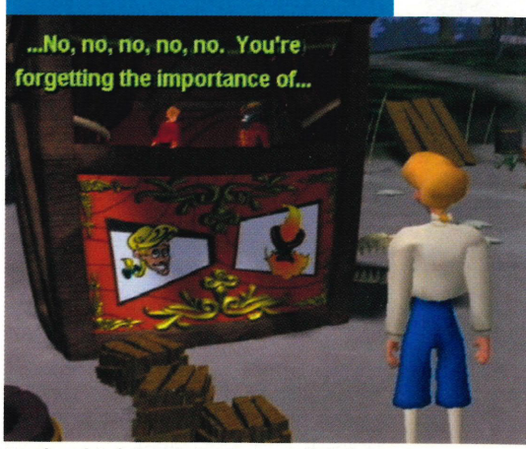
The move from 2D to 3D wasn't exactly greeted with open arms by the PC crowd. Was this done with an eye to the graphics-hungry audience on the PS2?
I would think so, that's definitely my opinion.

It must have been a bit easier than working on *Star Wars: Starfighter*?
Definitely. While it's a completely different game from the PC version and we do have an excellent team, it is a port and that did help. *Monkey* runs incredibly smoothly.

LucasArts' President Simon Jeffery has said the company is looking at sequels to previous LucasArts' adventures. Is *Monkey* a test case?
I would think so. *Sam & Max, Grim Fandango*... I'd really love to see some of those titles on the PS2. Those are my favourites – especially *Grim Fandango*, it's one of the greatest games I've ever played in my life. If *Monkey* does well on the PS2 with the new interface, it would be great to see other games go the same route. If this catches on? Who knows, we might even release more PS2 specific titles.

The game is a linear one. How much room is there for exploration and multiple paths?
It's fairly linear in that there's a start, middle and end, but there are different paths to take along the way, different items it's possible to receive and thousands of lines of dialogue that you might not even see but it's possible to trigger. You also have the option of travelling to alternative locations and talking to different people who have nothing to do with the ending – there are definitely different routes in *Monkey*, right up until the very end.

It's a shame that gamers could miss good jokes and better dialogue...
That's where the replay value comes in. If you want to rush through the game, that's fine, but you're going to miss a whole bunch of stuff. Plus, we have some hidden secrets in there too. What are they? Let's just say they involve Murray the talking skeleton...



Punch and Judy it ain't, but Guybrush finds fame with this puppet show of his escapades.

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10/10
PSi2
INTERACTIVE MAGAZINE

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* Includes the latest codes available from www.codejunkies.com, subject to publishers' release dates

Disc-plates glowing, sparks flying – *Le Mans 24 Hours* is a thrilling race experience.

Both GT and Prototype vehicles have been beautifully modelled.

LE MANS 24 HOURS

Driving non-stop for 24 hours sounds like a nightmare. To some, it's a sport.

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Melbourne House
Price: £44.99
Players: 1-2
Out: Now
Web site: www.lemans-game.com

Back story
First published on the PSone in 1999, *Le Mans 24 Hours* was originally a competent if slightly shallow racer. A tremendous Dreamcast update last year inevitably brought to mind a PS2 makeover. Melbourne House has delivered with the most comprehensive version to date.

Preparation is everything, so construct your checklist wisely. Three tins of tomato soup (to be eaten cold); a packet of digestive biscuits; paracetamol; a family sized tub of vanilla ice cream (to be consumed once melted); five bottles of Lucozade; packets of cigarettes; a sleeping bag. Now lock yourself away. Focus. Prepare yourself for a test of stamina that will put most joystick junkies to shame. This is endurance gaming at its most extreme. This is *Le Mans 24 Hours*.

For the particularly obsessive, *Le Mans 24 Hours* offers gamers the chance to spend a whole day with eyes glued rigidly to a weaving stretch of virtual Tarmac. But there is an irony at the heart of this racing experience. While *Le Mans 24 Hours* is demanding in terms of pure physical durability the handling model implemented in the game is more akin to an arcade racer.

In terms of structure this new racing title has impressive depth. Initial options include Quick Race, Championship, Le Mans 24 Hours and Time Trial. Predictably, Quick Race puts the player in command of one of the game's mid-range cars, provides practice for acclimatising to the handling model and gives a short three lap race against 12 moderate competitors. It proves diverting for a short time but the real motor sport aficionado will quickly crave the thrills of Championship mode.

It is here where the game really begins to shine. Offering eight distinct categories from Rookie GT through to Winter Endurance, the Championship mode is both satisfying and demanding. The goal is simple: work your way through the Rookie league table, picking up championship points, until you earn enough to unlock the next class. An extra incentive is offered in the form of hidden cars which are unlocked upon securing the winner's trophy. The Rookie GT class holds few challenges but once the Prototype, Super Endurance and Winter Endurance championships become available the player will soon find the lap count and course lengths increasing. Those wishing to undertake the full Le Mans experience can go straight into the Le Mans 24 Hours option, with both full race and Petit Le Mans (a shorter version of the experience) available from the main menu.

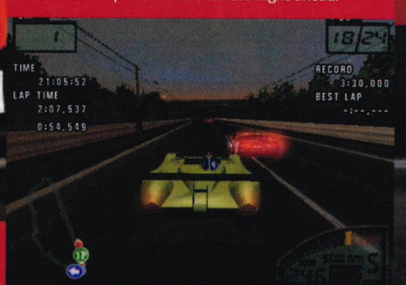
Thankfully, Melbourne House has implemented a solid game behind the wealth of options. While handling is geared towards accessibility there are some demands placed on the player to ensure an

FROM DUSK 'TIL DAWN

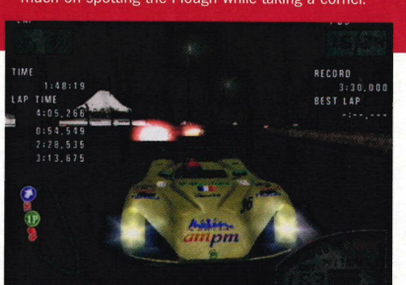
It might be the same stretch of road for 24 hours but at least the sky keeps changing colour to keep you entertained. Strap yourselves in.

Day time Driving in the midday sun provides few hazards for the competent driver. Now, if only this thing had a sun-roof.

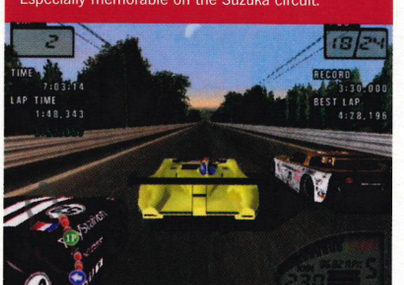
Late afternoon The sky begins to darken and the stomach begins to rumble. It's about this time you should unwrap the sarnies for the night ahead.



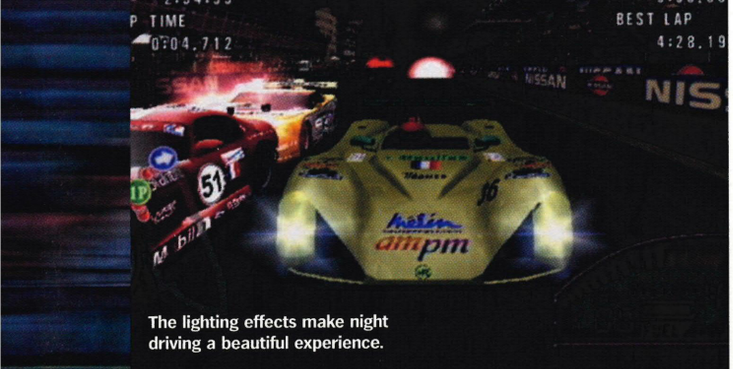
Dusk The sun disappears behind the horizon revealing a vista of stars. Try not to concentrate too much on spotting the Plough while taking a corner.



Night Visibility is severely reduced but the glorious lighting effects enhance the driving experience. Especially memorable on the Suzuka circuit.

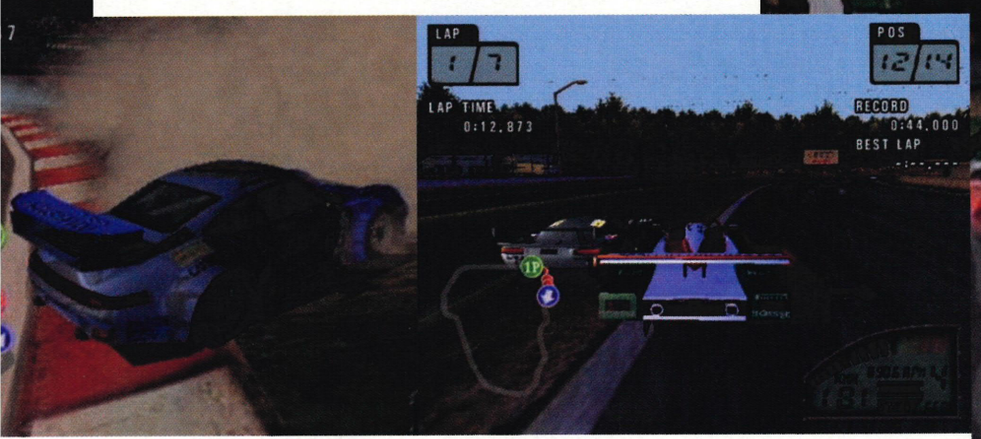


Dawn You still awake? After surviving the night's driving it's surely time to pit in and grab a well-deserved cup of coffee.



The lighting effects make night driving a beautiful experience.

Replays and running starts add nuff atmosphere to proceedings.

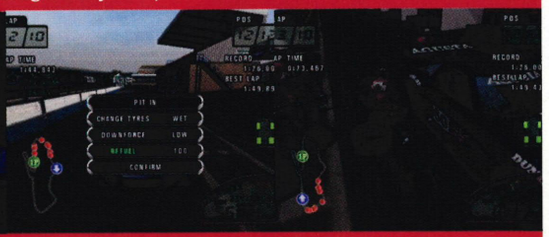


Cleverly, opponents can make unforced errors and roadside dust can severely obscure the road ahead.

THE PITS

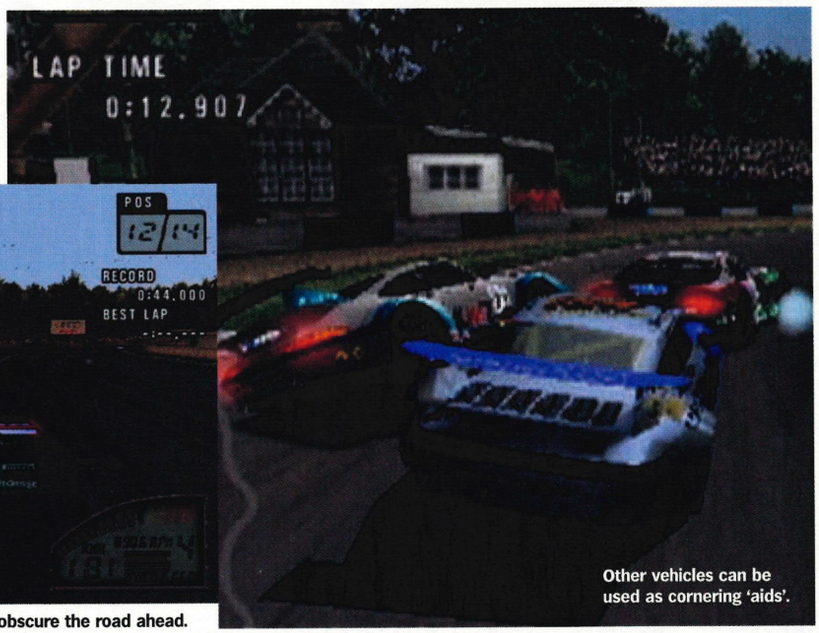
Taking pit stops at the right time can be the difference between winning and losing the race. (and having to wee yourself).

All vehicles can be customised to a limited degree in the workshop. Anything from downforce to gear ratios can be tweaked to suit the course and the player.



Enter the pit stop lane and a handy menu allows you to select the amount of fuel and tyre compounds needed for the next bout of laps.

Pit stops are vital in the endurance races. The animation is beautifully done and adds an air of authenticity missing from the Dreamcast version.



Other vehicles can be used as cornering 'aids'.

//Prepare yourself for a test of stamina that would put most joystick junkies to shame//

element of realism is retained. Once the Endurance championship is unlocked (ten laps minimum) tyre wear becomes a major factor. Leave your pit stop too late or select the incorrect tyres for the weather conditions and the player will soon find themselves slipping around the track.

ENDURO RACER

The race experience is certainly enhanced by the draw distance which displays an impressive 700 metres of Tarmac on certain tracks. Select the Road Atlanta course, with its emphasis on fast cornering, and the speed of the game will impress. The majority of courses are well modelled although the PS2's lack of built-in anti-aliasing gives a certain rawness to the edges of some structures and vehicle shadows. But the visuals only truly begin to impress when dusk falls and the stars come out in the sky. Driving by Suzuka's famous Ferris Wheel, illuminated against the night sky, is an experience to be savoured. The dynamic weather effects are equally well rendered adding a great deal of atmosphere to the long haul races.

A great deal of satisfaction can be derived from ascending the Championship league tables and the learning curve has been well judged.

Rivalries will soon emerge from your list of competitors and it is heartening to see that they can make unforced errors when the going gets tough. A host of additional options can be customised to raise the challenge including improving the rival driver AI, extending race time and turning tyre wear and fuel usage on. Pit stops are fully animated and give the player an opportunity to make strategic decisions on tyre choice and fuel load. A lighter tank will increase your vehicle's speed but limping over the finish line on a teaspoonful of gas is not recommended.

The full Le Mans experience is demanding only in terms of the number of laps which must be completed in full Endurance mode. Pounding down the track at ridiculous speeds and overtaking three cars on one corner lends itself more to the arcade driving enthusiast. Disappointingly, this approach encourages a cynical amount of gamesmanship. Rival cars can be used as barriers when cornering and the lack of damage means that the player never comes off worse after high velocity encounters. It's also a pity – due to licencing sensitivities – that cars do not suffer from mechanical failures. That's the real reason why the real Le Mans race is so dramatic.

Criticisms aside, Melbourne House have delivered a thrilling race title with enough depth and ambition to deserve a place in your game collection. The gentle learning curve and accessibility may well offer an alternative to those who find the *Gran Turismo 3* handling model too exacting. ☐ **Mark Walbank**

Look at the rear view to scope your rivals.

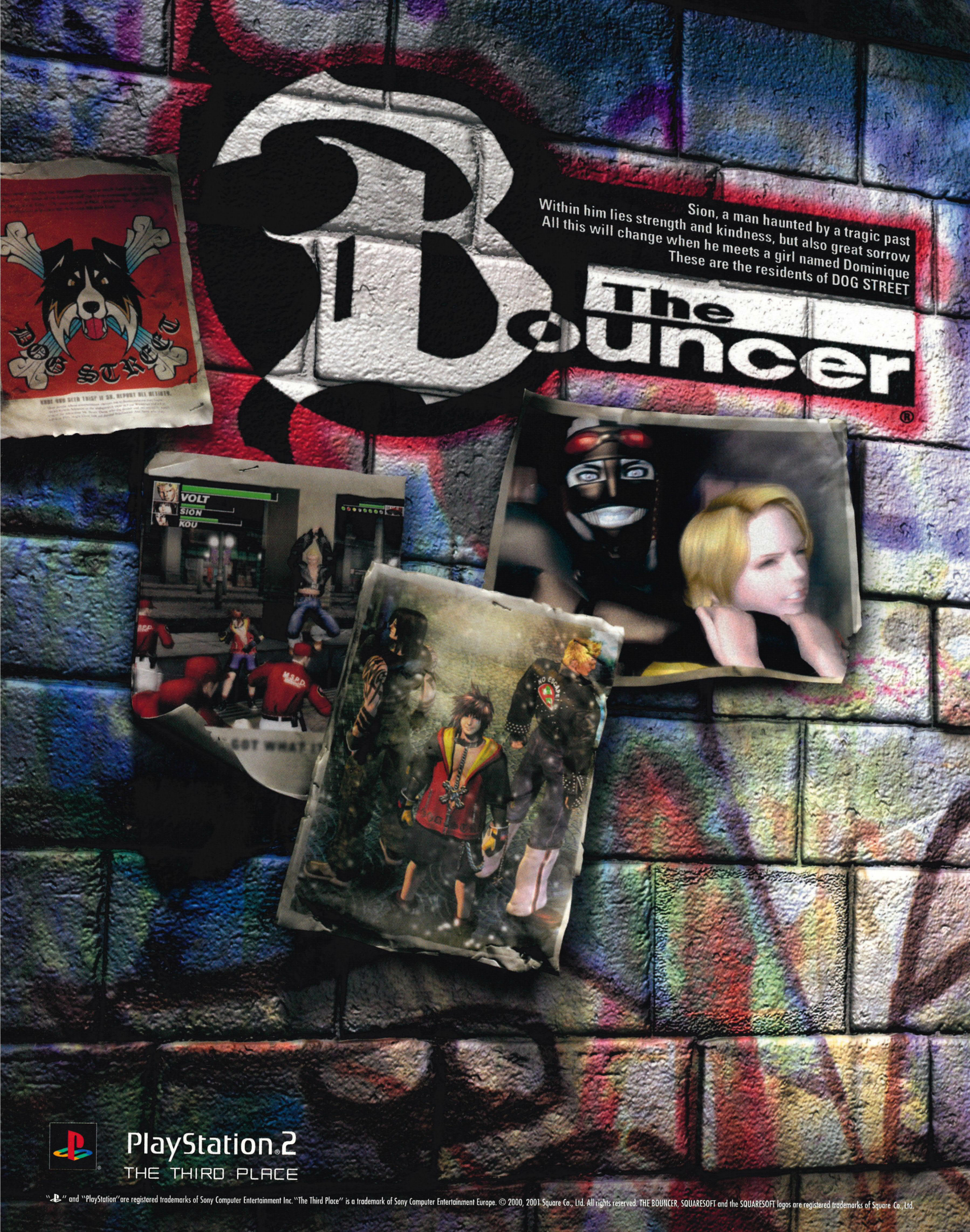
LE MANS 24 HOURS

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	More accessible for the gamer too daunted by simulation-style vehicle handling but retains depth and thrills in abundance. A worthy alternative to *Gran Turismo 3*.
- A wealth of options - Features plenty of unlockable features - Instantly accessible gameplay	- Some graphical rawness - No damage or mechanical failures - *Gran Turismo 3* is superior	

Graphics	Great weather and lighting effects	07
Sound	Poor engine notes and bland in-game music	05
Gameplay	Splendid arcade-style handling	08
Life span	Deeper than a euclidean philosopher	09

08

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



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DAYLY COE
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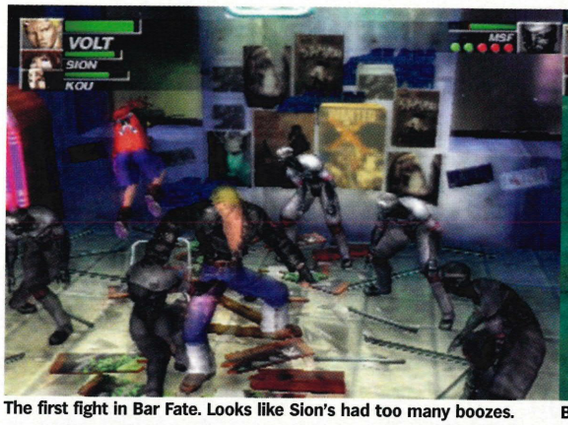
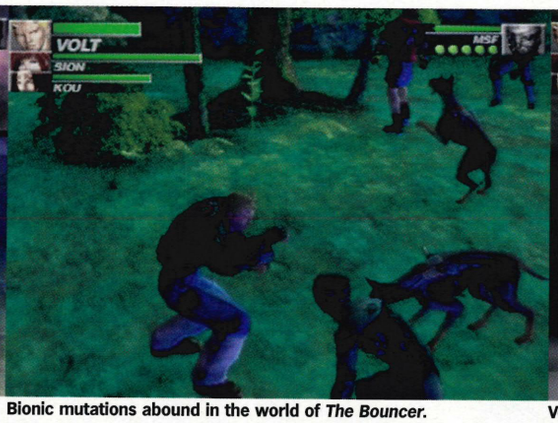


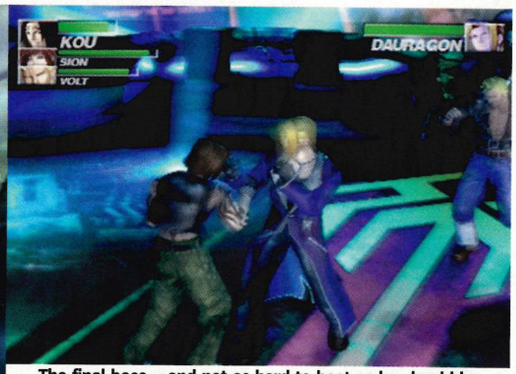
The first fight in Bar Fate. Looks like Sion's had too many boozes.



Bionic mutations abound in the world of *The Bouncer*.

Volt puts the finishing move to a 'Taunt Rush'.

Our boys. From left to right that's Sion Barzahd, Kou Leifoh and Volt Kreuger. They've left their black tie outfits at home.



The final boss – and not as hard to beat as he should be.

ON THE DVD

THE BOUNCER

So, genre-bending adventure from Squaresoft/Dream Factory or tarted up beat-'em-up?

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Dream Factory/Squaresoft
Players: 1-4
Release: June 8th
Price: £39.99
Web site: www.playonline.com

Back story
Dream Factory are the Japanese team behind such cult PSone hits as *Tobal No 1*, *Tobal No 2* and *Ehrgeiz* – a beat-'em-up featuring characters from *Final Fantasy VII*. They've now joined considerable forces with Squaresoft for *The Bouncer* with Square providing characterisation and the story and Dream Factory dishing out the beat-'em-up expertise.

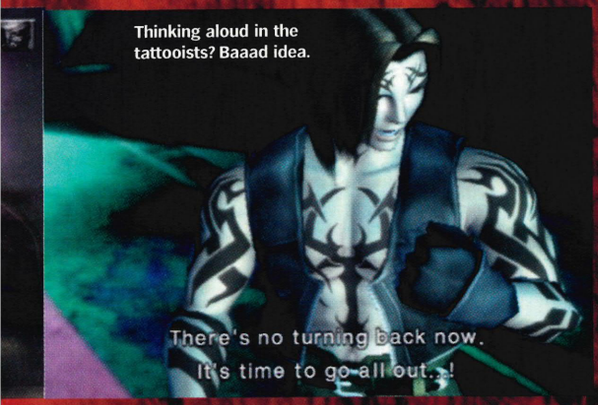
It's quiet day in Bar Fate. The three bouncers, Sion Barzahd (young and cocky), Kou Leifoh (smart and wiry) and Volt Krueger (big and, erm, horny) are idly sitting around when suddenly, out of the blue, the peace is shattered. A mysterious young girl with an obvious crush on Sion by the name of Dominique is kidnapped from under their noses by the special forces of the city's leading corporation, Mikado. The bouncers, being heroes, set out immediately to rescue her. So begins the long night that is the subject of *The Bouncer*.

Forget any talk you might have heard about genre-busting, *The Bouncer* is, basically, a beat-'em-up. It works as a series of set-piece fights (about 20-30 depending on the route taken) interspersed with dazzlingly good anime-style full motion video sequences. At the beginning of each fight you choose which of the three characters to take control of and the computer handles the other two and all your opponents. You duff up the opposition as the plot – being Japanese and involving honour, betrayal, trust, family, love and giant (more than a little evil) robots – moves inexorably on to its Earth-shattering climax.

Our main issue with *The Bouncer* is in its longevity. The first time you play through the game, it'll take you about two hours to finish. When you bear in mind that about an hour of that time will have been taken up watching the (admittedly excellent) FMV sequences that tell the story, it's not hard to reach the conclusion that this represents very poor value for money. One hour of gameplay is unacceptably short. Strangely though, it is understandable. What's clear from the off is this. *The Bouncer* really wants to be a film. As for the story? It begins In Media Res (a term meaning in the middle of the action, in this case the kidnap of Dominique), the adventure follows a classic screenwriting formula from then on (being split into three main parts) and at times essential gaming elements (such as the ability to see what's coming) are sacrificed for the sake of a better camera angle. If viewed as a film (lasting just over two hours) it does begin to outstay its welcome somewhat.

//Four players battling it out simultaneously in one big arena weeps hours of hilarity//

But *The Bouncer* is a videogame and the essential difference is that we have to pay twice as much for it as we would for a film. And for that we expect a lot more longevity. Which is where joint developers Squaresoft and Dream Factory would no doubt like to point out where the RPG element of their vision comes in. Each fight you complete in *The Bouncer* earns your principal character experience points which are then used to buy either one of the seven special moves available or to upgrade your three stats; Life, Power and Defence. Earning enough points to max out your stats and obtain all the moves will take, in our experience, about two complete plays through the game. So simply unlocking all the aspects of the three main protagonists requires you play the game through six times. Is anyone likely to make that effort? *The Bouncer* is fun, and the urge to collect things (even when they're as esoteric as special moves for a special character) is so darned strong that you are strongly likely to make the effort – at least for your favourite



Thinking aloud in the tattooists? Baaad idea.

In the excellent Versus Mode the arenas range from the incredibly large (like this one) to the ridiculously small (left).

STING WHEN YOU'RE WINNING

Progression through the game results in earning points which can then be spent on either driving up your statistics (to a pre-defined maximum) or purchasing special moves. Each character has seven special moves. To give you a flavour of them, here are all of Sion Barzahd's...

Buster Throw
L1 + △
Personalised version of the old shoulder throw. Unblockable. Throw your opponent into a startled enemy for even better results.

Torpedo Kick
L1 + □
Explosive donkey kick made by rolling to build up momentum. A very good rush move. Knocks the opponent flat out in one go.

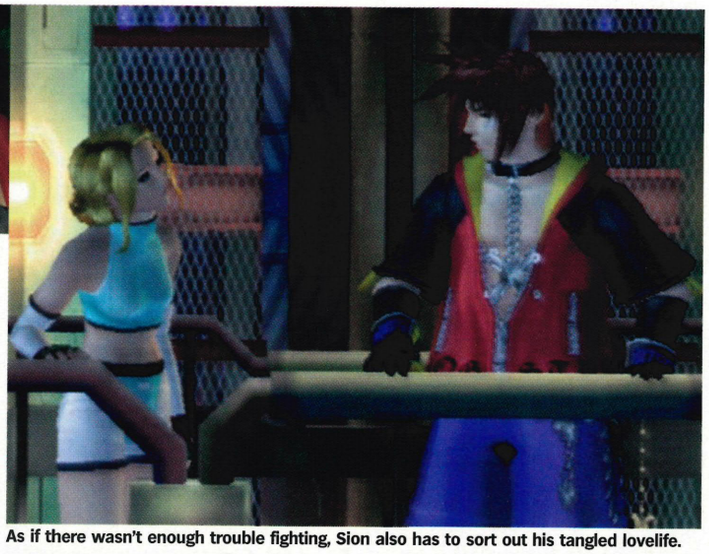
Ground Sweep
L1 + ✕
Wide-ranged, spinning squat kick. Can chain into multiple kicks. The move can be repeated. Knocks the nearest opponents down.

Floating Mine
L1 + ○
Horizontal flying back kick using both legs. Powerful balletic move that knocks the opponent down. Can be a bit slow.

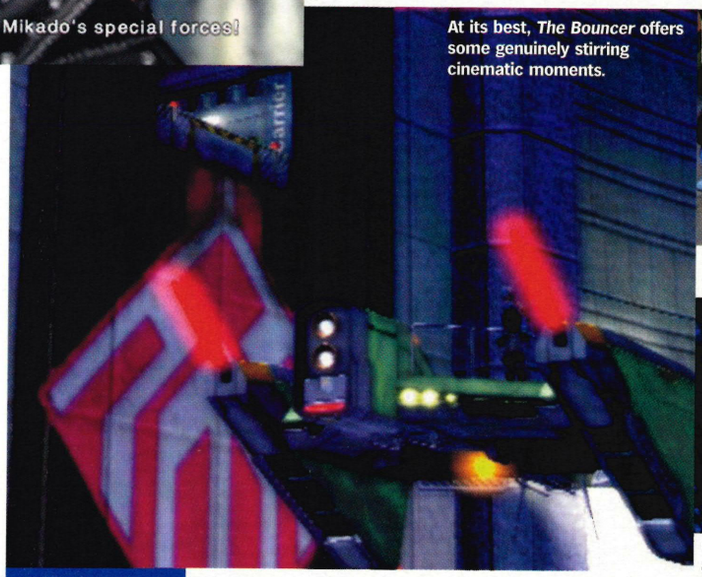
Tornado Uppercut
L1 + △ + ○
Powerful jumping uppercut. Knocks your unlucky opponent up into the air. With practice you can learn to 'juggle' with this.

Double Knuckle
L1 + □ + ✕
Double backhand blow striking forward and also backward simultaneously. Works when trapped in between two enemies.

Hurricane Blitz
L1 + ✕ + ○
Three hit combo. Powerful spinning attack striking all surrounding enemies. Unblockable but short range only.



As if there wasn't enough trouble fighting, Sion also has to sort out his tangled lovelife.



At its best, *The Bouncer* offers some genuinely stirring cinematic moments.

The PD-4 is a weird man-machine hybrid with a devastating long-range attack.

Going down: Camera angles are used effectively throughout the game.

ANY MORE LIP AND I'LL HAVE YOU...

Ⓐ - High Attack
Ⓑ - Middle Attack
Ⓧ - Low Attack
Ⓨ - Jump Attack

Using the analogue buttons, a hard press results in a more powerful attack. R1 blocks attacks and L1 accesses special moves. Combos are achieved by sequences of buttons, often including both hard and soft attacks. You'll notice that there's no controls for picking things up or throwing things. That's because *The Bouncer* doesn't let you interact with the scenery at all. As we associate bouncers with baseball bats and bottles, this is clearly a disappointment.

character. The giving of these gifts is well-paced too as every couple of fights should earn you something new. The replay value is aided also by the extra FMV scenes unique to each character. We don't want to give away the plot but, let's just say each of the three main characters has secrets, and that these secrets relate to them seeing parts of the plot alien to the other two.

Finally, is *The Bouncer* a good beat-'em-up? It's a very accessible battler – easy to get into, straightforward to use (see Sting When You're Winning for more on the controls) and enormous fun to play. Within minutes of grappling you'll rapidly become adept at dishing out mighty beatings. The flip side to all of this is you'll win nearly every fight first time. You'll have fun doing it, as we've said, but any idea of a challenge should be put aside. *Tekken Tag* it ain't. Those seeking a challenge are best advised to explore the Versus mode where the three bouncers and squadron of currently unlocked bosses are available for a hugely entertaining, four-at-a-time brawl. Four independently controlled characters battling it out in the one arena at the same time is as near to greatness as it gets. This weeps hilarity. Then there's Survival mode, a 10-stage, 50 enemy marathon where you take on pretty much every opponent in the game in one huge session without replenishing your life bar, it's as taxing as it sounds. The fact that it's possible to beat this challenge at all (which is tough) speaks volumes for the general weakness of the opposition. It's also a pretty soulless, grinding affair designed purely for the single-player completists to prove to themselves they're the hardest kids on the block.

The Bouncer is a mixed bag. On one hand it's a brave attempt at moving the boundaries of storytelling forward on the PS2 by attempting to emulate the format and mood of a movie, while on the other it's a fairly average, but entertaining enough entry level beat-'em-up with a top-fun four-player mode. Ultimately though, it feels as though Dream Factory and Squaresoft have over-stretched themselves trying to deliver something slightly beyond their reach. Certainly, it's a promise of better things to come. ☐ **Steve Faragher**

THE BOUNCER

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	Overall, a fun, accessible brawler and nothing more, despite what you may have heard. Has buckets of promise, but not much else.
- It looks absolutely bloody amazing - Brilliant anime storyline - We're helpless victims of the hype	- Just too easy - Doesn't last long enough - You need another reason?	

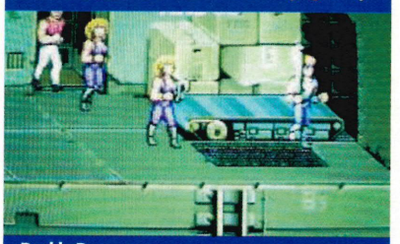
Graphics	Sumptuous, involving, sometimes breathtaking	09
Sound	Does the job, but nothing too special	07
Gameplay	Weak opponents, poor AI	05
Life span	An hour? We ask you	04

06

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

FIGHT CLUB

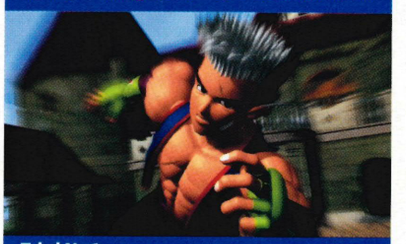
Action RPG? Scrolling beat-'em-up more like. Meet *The Bouncer*'s relatives from days gone by.



Double Dragon
The Taito big daddy 1987 arcade game. A girl is kidnapped, so two hard nuts must rescue her...

Final Fight
Capcom's answer to *Double Dragon*. A girl is kidnapped, so three hard nuts must rescue her...

Streets Of Rage
The 1991 Sega Mega Drive version of *Final Fight*. A sideways scrolling beat-'em-up in the classic mould.



Tobal No 1
Contains an Adventure mode in which you guide your chosen 3D fighter around a maze.

Crisis Beat
Beat-'em-up action laced with storytelling on the PSone has random objects doubling as weapons.

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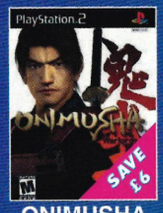

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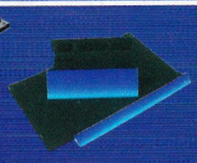
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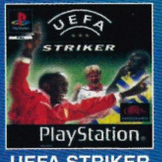

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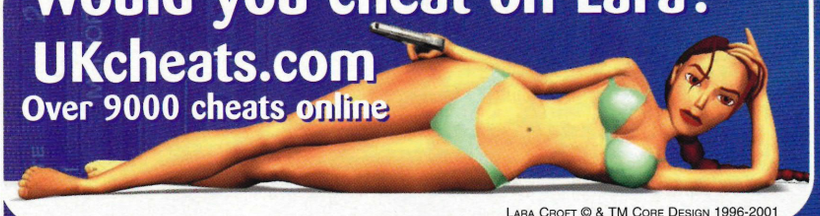
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PlayStation

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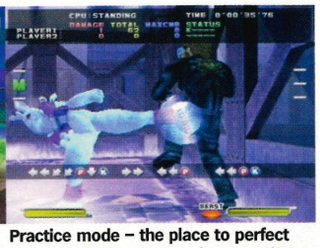
DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

(Above left) Uriko is a kind of weird, gangly half-beast with over-developed forearms. Cute ears mind.

Stun is oblivious to chameleon-man Busuzima due to his camouflage...

...and like lightning, Busu throws him high in the air using only his tongue.



Practice mode – the place to perfect chaining those killer combos together.

Uranus the Chimera – bet he got teased a bit at school...

BLOODY ROAR 3

Fur Fighters meets WWF in this transmogrification-fixated battler.

AORTAL COMBAT

All this blood reminds us of another game...

Blood! Several characters have a throw move (in beast form) which involves plenty of the red stuff.

Sauce! Jenny the shapely batlady likes nothing better than a neck nibble to open up the jugular.

Ketchup! Erm, nice doggie. Oh dear, he's gone for the forearm and it isn't even a full moon.

Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Developer: Hudson Soft
Price: £39.99
Players: 1-2
Out: June
Web site: www.hudson.co.jp/eng/news/br3_e.html

Back story
This is the first PS2 release from Japanese developers Hudson Soft. Their best-known games in the last few years have been for Nintendo, notably *Mario Party* and *Bomberman 64* on the N64. *Bloody Roar* first appeared on the PSone in '98, with a sequel following suit last year.

In line with the gory and fantastical premise, you'd expect something pretty spectacular to serve as an introduction to this violent world of half-man, half-wildlife exhibit fighters. In stark contrast to *Tekken Tag*'s movie-quality animations, the absence of anything in the way of a flashy introduction altogether comes as a bit of a shock. Instead *Bloody Roar* presents itself as an old school beat-'em-up featuring characters with the novel twist of possessing the ability to morph on command from their human forms into an array of deadly nightmare creatures (and back again).

Characters are well-drawn with a cast of interesting fighters whose shape-changing antics spice up the otherwise slightly predictable broth. There are enough special moves and complementary whizz-bang animations on the sidelines to saturate your retina with pleasure while the action is solid-feeling and responsive enough to allow for that magical transference where you briefly feel like you've actually become your chosen fighting alter-ego and unconsciously start grunting attractively as you ward off a flurry of blows or press your advantage home.

The creatures drips with flair and imagination tying in closely both the animal alter-egos and their wild-looking human counterparts thematically and visually. Each character feels very individualistic with Long's tigerish good looks allied to a range of fast, powerful and fluid moves while Bakuryu, the short-sighted mole of a boy, has a devastating range of powerful hand attacks. As for chameleon-bloke, what he can do with his tongue is every woman's wildest dream. Boys may feel confused by the gorgeous Uriko, who morphs into a rabbit while still retaining her optional skimpy, stockings and suspenders nurse's uniform.

Bloody Roar sadly manages to fall short of the mark with its limited scope. This isn't a game which has over-reached itself by any manner of means and while Hudson Soft has delivered an undeniably fun and classy fighter here, there's nothing in its fabric beyond the slick animation which pushes any boundaries. In other words, the likes of *Tekken Tag* and *DOA2* have already been here and done that and done it even better. This is very much an arcade game, delivered seamlessly to console, and it feels like it's chewing up your pocket money rather than delivering any great quality entertainment. It's fast and furious but curiously lacking in depth. Aficionados of the genre will find plenty of value here, but if you already feel like you've mastered as many button-pushing, D-pad swirling special moves as you'll ever want to, there's nothing here that's new. ☐ **Steve Faragher**

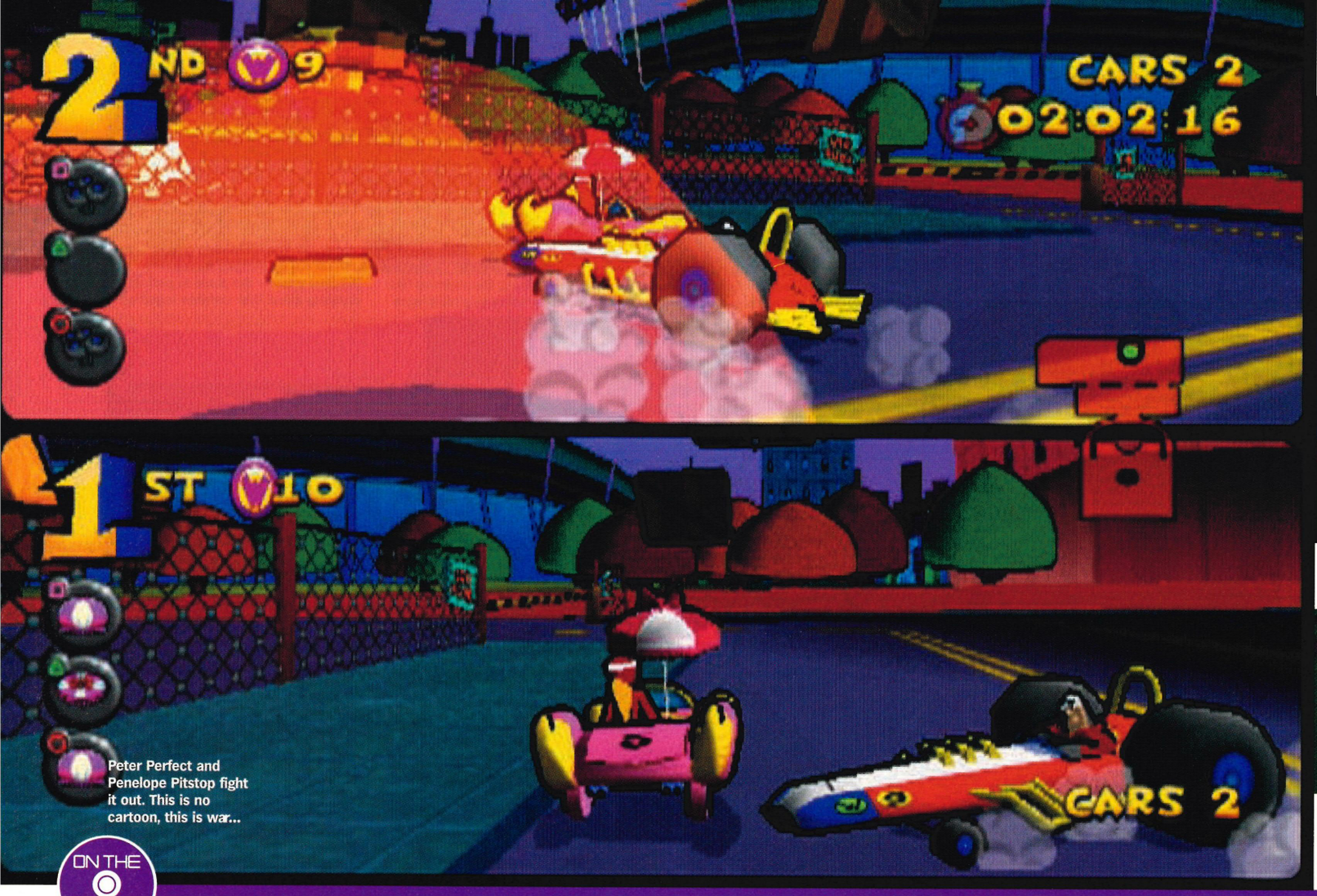
BLOODY ROAR 3

Why we'd buy it:	**Why we'd leave it:**	**Bloody Roarful? No, it's not that bad, but a good game marred only by its lack of depth.**
- Good-looking button-pounding fun - Interesting shape-changing twist - Bunnies in stockings	- Not different enough to stand out - Unengaging storyline	

Graphics	Slick, fluid animation	09
Sound	Meaty but grating old-metal soundtrack	07
Gameplay	Arcade-tastic button-bashing frenzy	07
Life span	Short-lived in single player	05

06

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT



Peter Perfect and Penelope Pitstop fight it out. This is no cartoon, this is war...

ON THE DVD

WACKY RACES

STARRING DASTARDLY AND MUTTLEY

Nostalgic cartoon racing with more weapons than a Middle Eastern dictatorship.

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Infogrames Manchester
Price: £39.99
Players: 1-4
Out: 27 June
Website: www.wackyraces-thegame.com

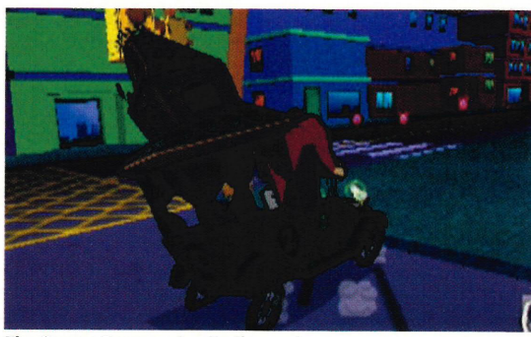
Back story
First released on Dreamcast last year *Wacky Races* has since been touched up for PS2 with visual extras and circuits. If it's a success, we're sure to see spin-offs featuring Dastardly and Muttley in which players have to, quite literally, stop that pigeon...

For people of a certain age, no school holiday was complete without a daily brain fix of *Wacky Races*. It was the Hanna-Barbera cartoon that had everything – totally pointless, yet mind-calmingly repetitive action, a baddie who resembled some kind of embittered old drag queen, and compelling betting opportunities ('Penelope Pitstop has been performing well this season, but on snowy terrain? I fancy Pat Pending to scoop this one'). For a long time, post-modern twentysomethings have been sitting around during gaming sessions asking 'Why has no one done a *Wacky Races* game? It would be fantastic'. And now someone has. And it isn't.

Check out the screenshots, though, and you'll see that, visually at least, Infogrames has done a very good job of approximating that crazy, brash cartoon world in a game. Just look at the expressionistic use of colour and shape. Clouds are blank white fluff, cliff-faces are moulded from various shades of brown, houses, trees and even the vehicles themselves are twisted and distorted impressions of what houses and trees and cars would look like on mind-altering chemicals. The artists have also used cel-shading techniques giving all the objects a black outline, which accentuates the cartoon nature of the game. It looks ace.

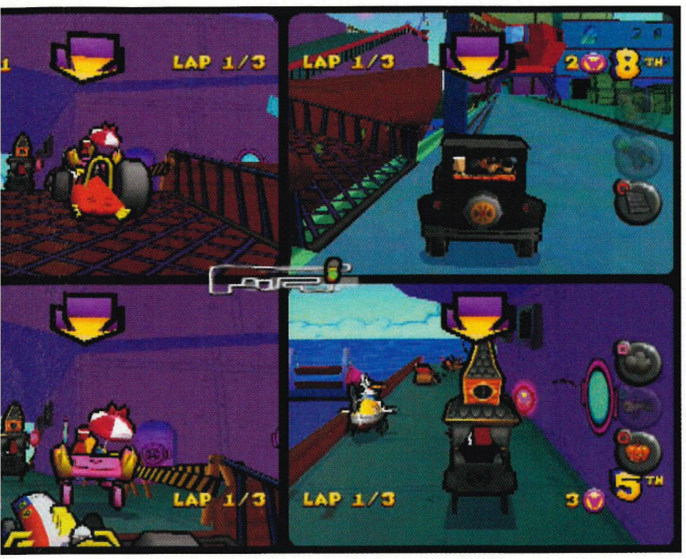
The imposingly epic game structure is impressive too. The Arcade mode offers the usual single race, time trial and competition options, but the main Adventure mode has you competing in a huge number of challenges all split into various themes, and then split again into different races and sub-challenges. For each race you win there's a gold star and as you collect more, these open up new areas and new challenges. OK this 'adventure structure' has been unashamedly swiped from Rare's classic *Diddy Kong Racing*, but it's a mildly interesting way of being told that you'll be expected to race on the same circuits over and over again, with different objectives each time.

And even when you discover this expectation, the prospect – in terms of visual impact, alone – doesn't fill you with mortal dread. The circuits are mostly well-imagined and filled with great cartoon detail. The surreal, desolate desert landscapes of *Wacky Races* have been replicated perfectly, but the designers have added other themed environments based around snow, forests and a



The Creepy Coupe: get outta the way!

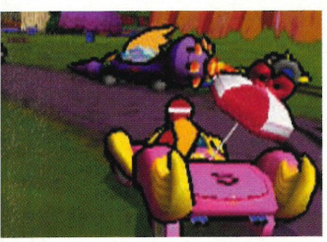
Crazy drivers pick up crazy tokens to power up crazy weapons. Crazy.



Four-player mode should be hilarious, but with a quarter of the screen each everyone spends much of their time lost.

All the cars float (of course) but water is difficult to steer in, adding extra aquatic thrills to the proceedings.

The ice circuits are strictly for racers with lots of grip.



Rush hour is getting beyond a joke..

'I KNOW THERE'S A TRACK IN HERE SOMEWHERE...'

Newcomers to *Wacky Races* may be amazed at the time they spend driving around in small circles, growing increasingly seasick, wondering exactly where they're supposed to be going. Can you spot the correct route in each of these examples?

"Hang on, weren't we meant to..." "No, there's definitely a turn here..." "I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE I AM!"

//With mere yards to the finishing line you can be bombed up the tailpipe back to seventh place//

wobbly cartoon city to name but a few. There are drawbridges, stomach-churning spirals, ramps, over-passes, under-passes, chicanes, hidden passages, alternative routes – the screen is crammed with activity. And wacky activity at that.

UNPREDICTABILITY

But, and this is a big but – a but so big that Wil E Coyote might be tempted to push it to the top of a cliff and drop it on an unsuspecting Road Runner – *Wacky Races* doesn't play well at all. When you have eight cars on screen, all throwing weapons at each other, skill can often become less important than luck – and this is the deadly sin of videogame design. Somehow, *Mario Kart* (the game that begun this whole comedy racer genre) got round this by making the weapons avoidable for veteran players. It had balance. In *Wacky Races*, you can be yards from the winning line when a bomb blasts you up the tailpipe out of nowhere and suddenly you're coming in seventh.

Similarly, the track design has just too many chinks in it, designed to catch out drivers. Lamp posts, flag poles, gates and fences all protrude into the racing line ready to jab and stop dead any car dead in its tracks unfortunate enough to be shunted into them. Again, game over.

These things in moderation are acceptable, but every track is filled to the brim with traps and power-ups, so if you're not driving straight into a previously unseen post, you're being knocked into it by a blast from out of nowhere. The track layout can also be desperately confusing with arrows that do little more than point aimlessly in the vague direction you're supposed to be heading in. This is quite hateful. When you get better at the game, and start memorising the lay-outs, you'll learn to exist within this cruel capricious environment, but by then, you may have seen all you wanted to see. You'll have had your nostalgia fix.

Not to be too unfair, *Wacky Races* is a decent game. There has been some real effort – with the character, vehicle and background designs – to capture the spirit of the cult cartoon. There's also a massive challenge here and uncovering all the areas of the Adventure mode will take a few weeks and test your knowledge of each circuit's secret routes and areas to the max. However, the arbitrary nature of each race, together with the basic handling (so simple it almost isn't there, although selecting advanced handling in the Options menu improves this a little) mean that many gamers will lose interest a long way before the end. Not exactly Dastardly then, but certainly a long way behind Peter Perfect. ☐ **Keith Stuart**

Nice mover, one careful owner, no MOT. Apply c/o Box 2049. Ask for Rufus.

WACKY RACES

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	Misty-eyed fans of the series will love the visuals, the weapons and the vehicles. Then the average gameplay will puncture their enthusiasm.
- Great cartoon visuals - Plenty of long-term challenge - Penelope Pitstop fires lips at other drivers	- Lack of game balance makes luck a vital factor - Difficult to see where you're going - Voice samples quickly become irritating	

Graphics	Captures the spirit of the original cartoon	07
Sound	The original sound effects are fantastic	06
Gameplay	Lacks balance and credibility	06
Life span	Many challenges, but will you bother?	06

06

PlayStation.2 VERDICT

WEAPONS OF CHOICE

The bombs, boosters and guns you shouldn't be seen dead without this season.

Each Wacky Racer has it's own personalised weapons and power-ups, and they're all variations on these four speedy, deadly and exciting flavours.

1. The bomb
Drop these behind you to foil potential tailgaters. Peter Perfect deposits a tyre mine, while perfectly reasonably, the Boulder Mobile deposits gravel.

2. The gun
Shoots at the cars in front to steal their place. Simple. The Ant Hill mob have Tommy Guns, while Dastardly's Mean Machine boasts a handy shrinking ray, perfect for cutting the opposition down to size.

3. The boost
Gives you a quick boost of speed when you need it. The Creepy Coupe unleashes its dragon to accelerate, while the Buzz Wagon simply uses four base-mounted saws to hover quickly.

4. The shield
Protects you from the weaponry hi-jinx of your opponents. Penelope Pitstop has a handy umbrella which covers her car. The Arkansas Chugga-Bug inflates it's 'Gum Shield'. Hilarious pun, isn't it?

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A night level. Like day, only darker.

Attacking a rogue cassette of Phil Collins' classic *Face Value*.

While in the *Army Men*'s world you engage in some dull and extremely linear warfare.

Dragging objects around with your winch ranges from useless to bloody useless.

No, it doesn't make sense to us either why a huge CD would be found lying on the jungle floor.

ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK: BLADE'S REVENGE

The Green Army takes to the skies and plummets like a crippled pigeon.

Publisher: 3DO
Europe
Developer: 3DO
Price: £39.99
Players 1-2
Out: Now
Web site:
www.3do.com/products/playstation/airattack2

Back story
Historically the *Army Men* games are known as the worst game franchise ever. *Blade's Revenge* is an update of the original *Air Attack* which appeared on PSone last year. We have no doubt that this game will be appearing on every format under the sun. But luckily for us we're getting it first on PlayStation 2. Sorry everyone.

You have to wonder what the appeal of *Army Men* is. Yes, it's a game franchise based on those little green soldiers that you may have played with as a nipper. Yes, it does bring back memories of re-enacting WWII using you mum's tablecloth and assorted kitchen-based utensils as a battleground. But as with many childhood memories the truth is that they were actually quite rubbish.

Not unlike the basic premise of *Air Attack: Blade's Revenge* then. As if we needed to tell you, you play a helicopter pilot in the Green Army (the good guys) and you're up against the Tan Army (the bad guys). Good guys? Bad guys? Since when was war that black and white? Anyway, what follows is a series of helicopter-based missions through *Army Men*'s world and (via a series of portals) our world where the Army Men are tiny; everyday objects such as bees, tyres and Cornflakes packets are huge. What a gimmick.

The stuff you get to do: Shoot things. Carry things with your helicopter's winch. And well, that's about it. As with about 90% of these army mission-based games you spend much of your time escorting objects from one section of a level to another, collecting parts to secret weapons and missions where you just blow the hell out of everything on screen. Even though the game boasts something like 15 levels, these three categories pretty much cover everything the game has to offer. So the word we'd use is 'uninspired'.

A bit of fun can be had with the different helicopters and co-pilots (each co-pilot gives you a different special attack) and with the two-player co-operative and battle modes but it's like playing with blinkers on. Things probably wouldn't be so bad if there was something nice to look at. Which, of course, there isn't. Like everything else thus far released on PS2 by 3DO, *Air Attack: Blade's Revenge* looks like a 'res-ed up' version of a PSone game – a smoother frame rate, more colours, but no real attempt to utilise all the power that PS2 has to offer. The enemy AI is pretty substandard (enemy units simply hang around until your presence triggers them to attack) and the controls and level design leave a lot to be desired.

Air Attack: Blade's Revenge is yet another poorly conceived, inadequately executed *Army Men* game. It isn't as bad as the loathsome *Green Rogue* or as some of the efforts on PSone but for a PlayStation 2 game, it really is up there with the worst on the console. ☐ **Nick Jones**

BRING THE TOYZ

In lieu of anything else interesting to write about, here's the toys that you used to play with that would make great videogames. Well, maybe.

PHOTO: KATHARINE LANE-SIMMS

1. Weebles
These egg-shaped freaks "wobble but don't fall down", making it ideal for something of a *Marble Madness* crossed with a *Mario* style platformer. We seem to remember there being a whole family of these freaks, so some kind of 'rescue the family from the evil Dr. Egg' scenario would be on the cards.

2. Big Trak
Big programmable truck that could be used to carry everything from a tin of baked beans to your cat. Assuming that you drugged it first, of course. In game form, Big Trak would become the mutha of all construction games where you move rocks from one place to another and then back again. Perhaps not that great but still as much fun as *Army Men*.

3. Mouse Trap
Strictly speaking a board game where you had to get your mouse around a board without being caught in the trap. This could work like *Theme Park World* where you build bigger and more elaborate traps to catch mice.

4. Buckaroo
Like the real game, the objective would be to put on all the 'horse accessories' without causing the horse to buck. Variety could be added with different weather conditions, night/day levels and realistic horse physics. Look, we're trying here.

5. Sylvanian Families (only from Tomy)
Like *The Sims* crossed with Tamagotchi but with squirrely/mole creatures dressed in Victorian clothes. You'd get to teach them how to eat, make polite conversations and poo. You could also watch as Action Man makes a cameo appearance and kills all the little f**kers.

6. Cowboys and Indians
Dare we suggest it? Little plastic cowboys and Indians, plastic horses, wagons… All fighting it out for possession of a nation, bows and arrows against Colt .45s. Sadly the cowboys would eventually win whatever, with the few remaining Indians left to live out their lives on reserves, eventually taking revenge on the stupid palefaces by building casinos and ripping them off at blackjack. Maybe not.

ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK: BLADE'S REVENGE

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	Boring, repetitive and uninspired, *Blade's Revenge* wouldn't be acceptable on PSone and it shouldn't be on PS2. Run away fast.
- If little green men told us to	- It's a lazy rehash of an old PSone game - One of the worst-looking PS2 games yet	

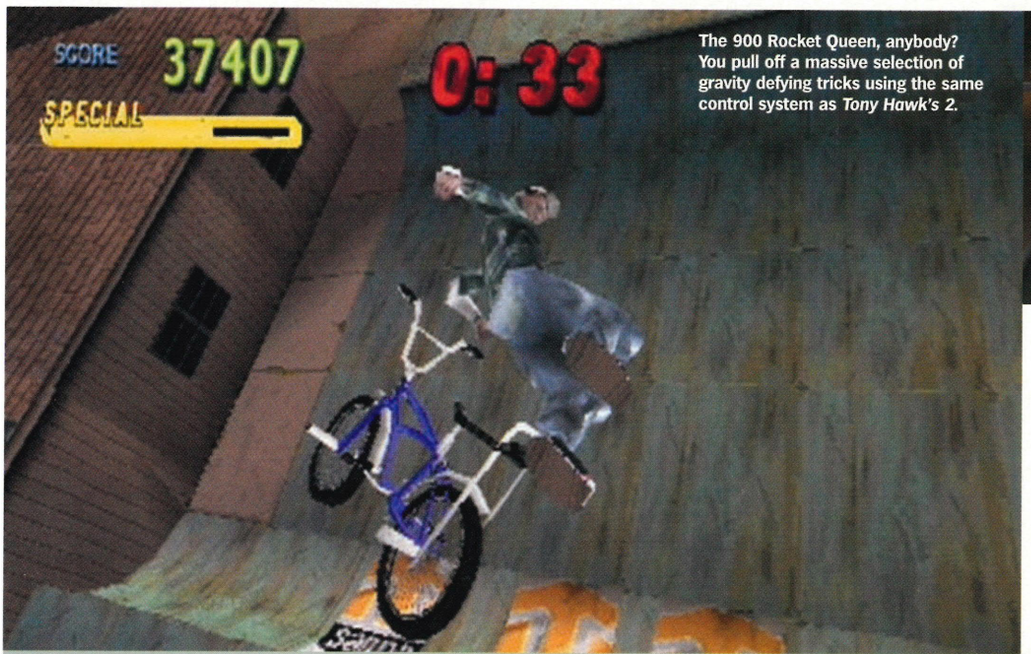
Graphics	Difficult to see anything in front of you	02
Sound	Ordinary explosions and military soundtrack	03
Gameplay	Challenging, but only because it's boring	02
Life span	You won't play much past level three	03

02

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

PSone™

Edited by Nick Ellis, *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*



The 900 Rocket Queen, anybody? You pull off a massive selection of gravity defying tricks using the same control system as *Tony Hawk's 2*.

Fancy meeting you here! Mr Hawk is one of the bonus riders and there's a couple of levels from *THPS2* to unlock too.

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX

For Activision's next trick, it's stuntpegs at dawn. Welcome to BMX, *Hawk*-style.

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Runecraft
Price: £29.99
Players: 1-2
Out: Now

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 was without doubt one of the finest videogames ever to grace the PSone. It also helped skateboarding to gain mainstream acceptance and elevate the Hawkster to something of a Stateside celebrity (he was on the front cover of *Time* for God's sake!). Now Mat Hoffman, top dog in the BMX world, lends his monicker to another Activision street sport title and the results, we are pleased to announce, are as admirable as Hawk's first outing.

The game is built firmly on the foundations laid by the first Tony Hawk game and while this means Mat Hoffman's is instantly recognisable as a direct descendant, you couldn't ask for a more solid base on which to practice the balls out art of BMX riding. And anyway, riding a bike is a lot different to skating a deck – there are two less wheels for a start.

//Riding a BMX is a lot different to skating on a board – there are two less wheels for a start//

One-player Career mode, the key that unlocks extra levels, bikes and secrets, has you working through ten levels tackling objectives of increasing difficulty. There are five tasks to complete in each level: A pro score, an expert score, find the hidden cover, collect T-R-I-C-K and knock over some pieces of public or private property. There are also two compulsory competitions to enter with a top three ranking required for a medal.

One of the marked differences between *Mat's* and *Tony's* is the way the levels are designed with distinct 'lines' or 'runs', meaning you can charge down a course picking your tricks on the obstacles that will score the most points (and of course look the best). The Construction Yard is a prime example of this, a downhill dirt course complete with unfinished bridges to leap and JCBs to grind.

The levels are packed with variety and are a joy to ride around and the tasks taxing enough to keep you interested. Of the other features, Two player mode suffers from unavoidable split-screen smallness, unless you happen to own a mammoth widescreen TV, and there's a Park Editor included too, allowing you to create your own.

Other top BMX names on the player roster include Joe 'Butcher' Kowalski, Cory Nastazio plus Brit number one Simon Tabron. Whether the game will help raise the renown of Hoffman and friends and the profile of BMXing as a whole, we'll have to wait and see. At the very least, it offers stacks of playing time and much satisfying gnarliness. And we didn't mention *BMX Bandits* once... ☐ **NE**

What is it with these extreme sports games and stupid trick names? Toadstool? I ask you...

Ouch. Getting it wrong or trying for one spin too many leads to predictably painful results.

PSone™

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX

Graphics Good animation, solid backgrounds	08
Sound Fringe skate rock soundtrack	07
Gameplay Outlandish trickery is a joy to perform	09
Life span Exciting levels make for a good ride	08

Not quite *THPS2* quality, Activision's foray into the world of two wheels is playable and very enduring.

09

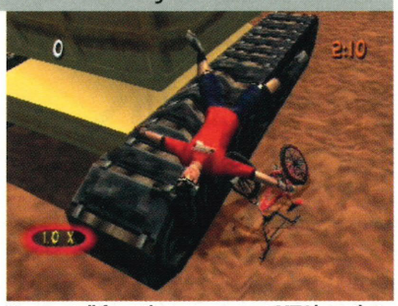
VERDICT

MTV SPORTS: TJ LAVIN'S ULTIMATE BMX

Another sorry MTV endorsement that leaves you saddle sore.

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Blue Shift
Price: £29.99
Players: 1-2
Out: Now

If *Mat Hoffman's* is the glistening new Chopper hot off the production line, THQ's BMX offering is the barely rideable heap of rust languishing at the back of the garden shed. Unsurprisingly, *TJ Lavin* follows the same one-player career format as *Mat's*; working through the levels by collecting high scores, vandalising pieces of public property etc. Inferior in every way to the Activision title, the levels are poorly designed, trick animations are wobbly and unrealistic and to cap it off there's a distinct lack of pace throughout. If there is a saving grace, it's with the decent number and variety of two-player games. Hardly acceptable for a budget title, as a full price game this slams hard. ☐ **NE**



You can tell from the ever-present MTV logo that the game is going to stink like a dead badger.

PSone™

A woeful attempt at capturing the spirit of BMX, *TJ Lavin* feels as cheap as it looks. Flip to the *Mat Hoffman* review on the opposite page for how it should be done.

03

VERDICT

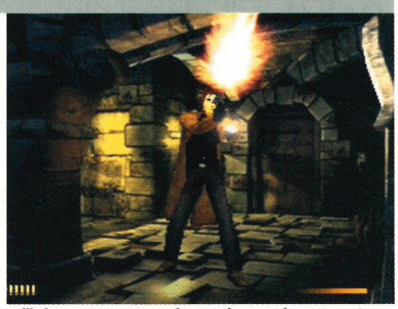
ALONE IN THE DARK 4: THE NEW NIGHTMARE

The undead muster once again in another house of horror.

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Darkworks
Price: £29.99
Players: 1
Out: Now

Credited as the game that invented the survival horror genre, *AITD* returns for a fourth outing (the second on PSone) with a tale of lurching beasties, howling devil mutts and confounding puzzles around every shadowy corner.

As in *Silent Hill*, the use of light is imperative in building and maintaining the spooky atmosphere. The two heroes, Aline and Edward, carry flashlights that lend the game a twitchy paranoia as well as illuminate the impressively rendered backgrounds. It's a little on the short side and not too tricky for hardened horror campaigners but a cracking plot, moody settings and the chance to once again frag the forces of evil makes it worthwhile number. ☐ **NE**



Will they never return from whence they came? *AITD* sees Edward Carnby, wrong-place-wrong-time hero, fends off another legion of gaming undead.

PSone™

***The New Nightmare* ironically suffers from a lack of originality and is not as eerie as *Silent Hill* but is still an immensely playable adventure in the familiar *Resident Evil* survival-horror mould.**

08

VERDICT

POWER DIGGERZ

Oriental oddity that likes to call a spade a shovel.

Publisher: JVC
Developer: Taito
Price: £19.99
Players: 1-2
Out: Now

Imagine *Bob the Builder* spending a few years on a Japanese construction site eating sake-soaked Sushi and driving JCBs and you're half way to *Power Diggerz*. Using three diggerz of varying size and manoeuvrability, you work your way through levels that range from the normal (knocking down houses and shovelling sand) to distinctly surreal (scooping distressed turtles from an ice cold pool and making enormous batches of curry). Earning cash is the aim so mess up a job and you'll incur the wrath of the manic foreman as well as having your wages docked. It's a little short on levels and gets monstrously difficult but you won't find many games more original or amusing than this. ☐ **NE**

Can u dig it? *Power Diggerz* is guaranteed to bring the house down with it's quirky humour and original gameplay.

PSone™

It's chuckle factor ten in this bizarre and original Oriental building site game that has you fulfilling all manner of strange tasks in your JCB.

08

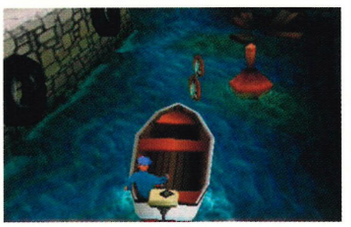
VERDICT

ALSO RELEASED THIS MONTH...

Gaulish japery and cartoon frolics in **ASTERIX: MEGA MADNESS...** Criminally good cop and robbers action in **WORLD'S SCARIEST POLICE CHASES...** More BMX banditry with **DAVE MIRRA'S FREESTYLE BMX REMIX...** Check out Inafune-san's back catalogue with **MEGAMAN X5...** This time, it's war thanks to **WDL: WARJETZ...** Schlock horror in spooksome film conversion **EVIL DEAD: HAIL TO THE KING...** Plus bargains aplenty with wallet-friendly re-releases of **SYPHON FILTER 2, IN COLD BLOOD, STREET FIGHTER EX2 PLUS** and **TOSHINDEN 4**. Don't forget for all the latest PSone news, reviews, previews and playable demos, see our sister mag, **OFFICIAL UK PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE...**

PSone™

ROUNDUP



NEWS

E3 REPORT

E3 wasn't exactly brimming over with quality PSone titles but there were a few to keep the old machine paddling along for a while yet. Gabe Logan returns for more terrorist bashing frolics in SCE's *Syphon Filter 3*, which includes an enhanced Two-player mode and new mini-games. *Final Fantasy Chronicles*, a bundle of early *FF* titles, gets a European release and there's more epic RPGing with *Breath of Fire IV. Destination Adventure, MIB – The Series: Crashdown* and *Traffic Giant* round off the highlights.

PREVIEW

X-MEN: MUTANT ACADEMY 2

One of Activision's three E3 sequels (*Spider-Man 2* and *Tony Hawk's 3* being the others) the second *X-Men* 2D beat-'em-up aims to improve upon the disappointments of the first. Boasting the original crew of Wolverine and chums, plus plenty of new bad-ass freaky mutants from the *X-Men* universe the movement of the fighters is far more fluid, with a new and impressive range of special attacks. The visuals are also impoved, with excellent backgrounds and bold characters.

PREVIEW

THE ITALIAN JOB

The seminal Sixties bank job film gets dressed up in PSone clothes for a *Driver* style rev-'em-up. You play Charlie Croker and chums as they attempt to relieve the Italian treasury of several tons of gold bullion. Bombing around in Mini Coopers, you get to visit the familiar and lovingly reconstructed locations from the films – London, Turin and the Alps. With the addition of a heap of unlockable sub-games we might just have a classic on our hands.

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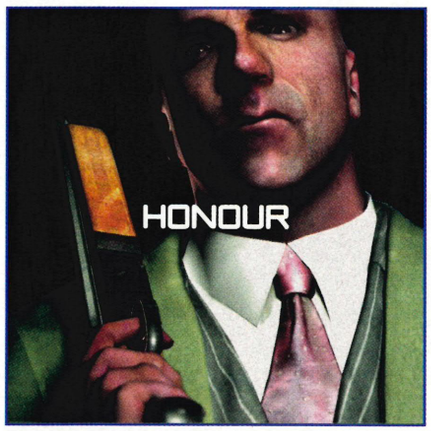

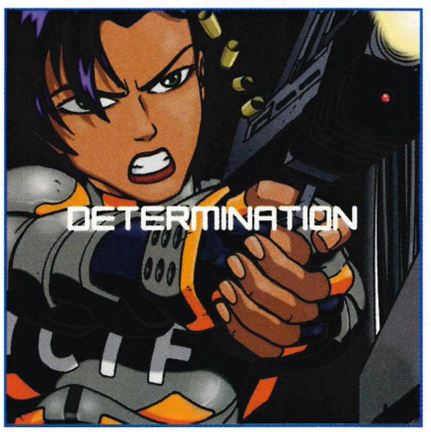

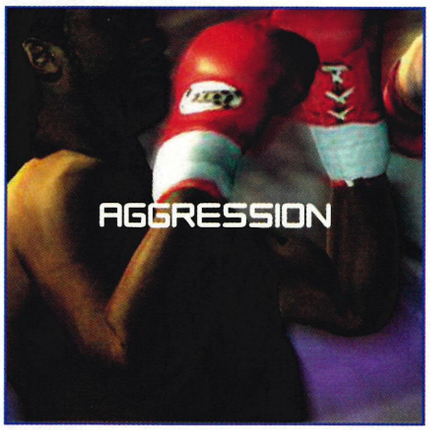

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media

DVD/INTERNET/PRINT/MUSIC

PS2 doesn't just play games, you know. Here's some other stuff you might like...

Media text by: Graham Dalzell/Lee Hart/Mike Goldsmith/Sam Richards/George Walter/Iain White

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON

Columbia TriStar/£19.99/Out now

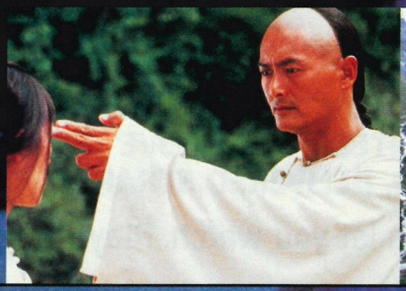
Film: For the first 15 minutes of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* it's hard to understand why it has become the highest grossing foreign language film ever made. Aristocratic types wandering around 19th Century China, refusing to look each other in the eye and getting all hot under the collar about an ancient sword called The Green Destiny. Those who failed to catch the film at the cinema could be forgiven for wondering what all the fuss is about.

But once the sword is stolen by a mysterious warrior and a jaw-dropping battle takes place along the sides of buildings and across rooftops, the film soars into beautifully choreographed life. Equal parts doomed romantic epic to martial arts extravaganza, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is a magical achievement in both departments.

Features: Commentary by director Ang Lee and writer James Schamus. A *Making Of* documentary *Unleashing The Dragon* which is overly promotional but has some great behind the scenes footage of the 'wire work' choreography. Finally, there's a 13 minute *Conversation With Michelle Yeoh* where she discusses how she came to star in the movie.

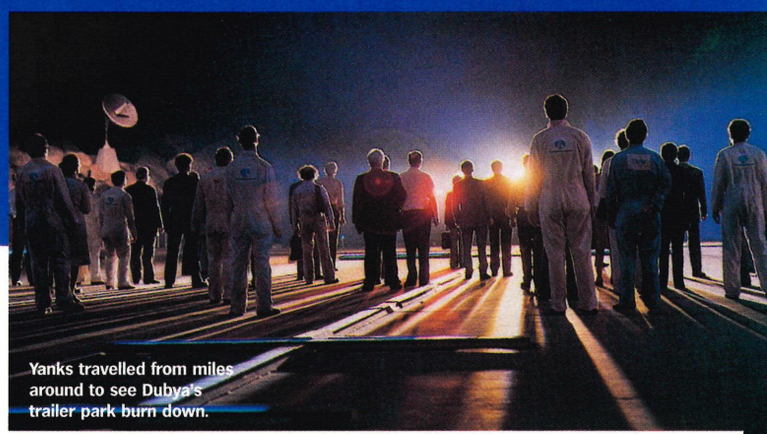
Verdict: An extraordinary mythical tale that seamlessly blends emotion and action. **8/10**

(Below) Chow the baptist performs another watery induction.
(Below, right) The world's worst hide-and-seeker flops again.



"A bullet in the head or a sniff of my pits. Your choice, Il Caponey..."

PHOTOS: PICTORIAL PRESS



Yanks travelled from miles around to see Dubya's trailer park burn down.

THE UNTOUCHABLES

Paramount/£19.99/Out now

Film: It's Thirties Chicago and the height of the Prohibition era. Mafia boss Al Capone (Bob De Niro) is making his fortune running illegal drinking dens and killing anyone who attempts to stop him. Enter Eliot Ness (Kevin Costner) a whiter-than-white federal agent on a mission to end Capone's reign of terror. After finding three more honest men in the corrupt police force, Ness forms a team of 'Untouchables' and begins to close the net on Capone's organisation.

Filmed during that golden era before Costner became an ego-maniac, *The Untouchables* is fantastic entertainment. Bolstered by a cracking script from David Mamet – "I want him dead! I want his family dead! I want his house burned to the ground!" – and an Oscar-winning performance by Sean Connery as a veteran cop teaching Ness how to fight Capone, this might not be entirely historically accurate but after Connery's heartbreaking death scene, the *Battleship Potemkin* inspired shoot-out and the thrilling courthouse finale, you'll be too enthralled to care.

Features: Sadly, just the theatrical trailer.

Verdict: A classic crime thriller on a disappointing DVD. **9/10**

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND

Columbia TriStar/£19.99/25 June

Film: The movie that showed alien visitors wouldn't necessarily be war-mongerers with slimy tentacles, *Close Encounters* is the last word in extra terrestrial contact (save for maybe Spielberg's own *ET*) with Roy Neary (Richard Dreyfuss) the focus of the movie.

As an everyman somehow in tune with the aliens, confusing messages inspire him to build a monument out of mashed potatoes that resembles Devil's Tower in the Wyoming desert – the place where awe-inspiring first contact awaits. While very much a product of the Seventies, *Close Encounters* has aged admirably. Thoughtful, imaginative and filled with that sense of wonder only Spielberg seems capable of capturing, it's a welcome reminder of a period when big budget didn't have to mean big bangs and big waste of space.

Features: A whole second disc full of bonus materials, the highlight of which is the 100 minute *Making Of* documentary, covering everything you could possibly wish to know about the film.

Verdict: Probably Spielberg's most personal film and still one of his very best. **8/10**

Carrey's trusty old glue-on-lips trick claimed yet another victim.

"Arnold, I love you and I always have. But you gonna have to lose the head..."

ME, MYSELF AND IRENE

Fox/£19.99/Out now

Film: Peaceable Rhode Island cop Charlie (Jim Carrey) isn't a happy man. His wife has cuckolded him with a midget and left him to raise the resulting triplets, he's a laughing stock in town and the neighbour's pooch likes to empty itself all over his garden. After suffering indignities like these it's no wonder Charlie turns schizo and his malevolent alter ego, Hank bubbles to the surface.

When Charlie has to escort the fugitive Irene (Rene Zellweger) to upstate New York, it's the cue for knockabout comedy larks and a battle of wills between Charlie/Hank as they both begin to fall in love with their prisoner. After pelvic-thrusting the hilarious *Kingpin* and *There's Something About Mary* onto an unsuspecting world, it seems the Farrelly brothers are beginning to run out of original ideas. *Me, Myself And Irene* certainly has its moments, but its over-reliance on bodily-function gags and Jim Carrey's tedious hyperactive mugging soon begins to reek of desperation.

Features: Ten deleted scenes, most of which are just extended cuts of scenes that made it into the movie – subtle, urbane incidents like Hank pissing in a car's petrol tank and taking a crap on a lawn.

Verdict: Funny at first but outstays its welcome like a stubborn floater. **5/10**

THE SIXTH DAY

Columbia/£19.99/Out now

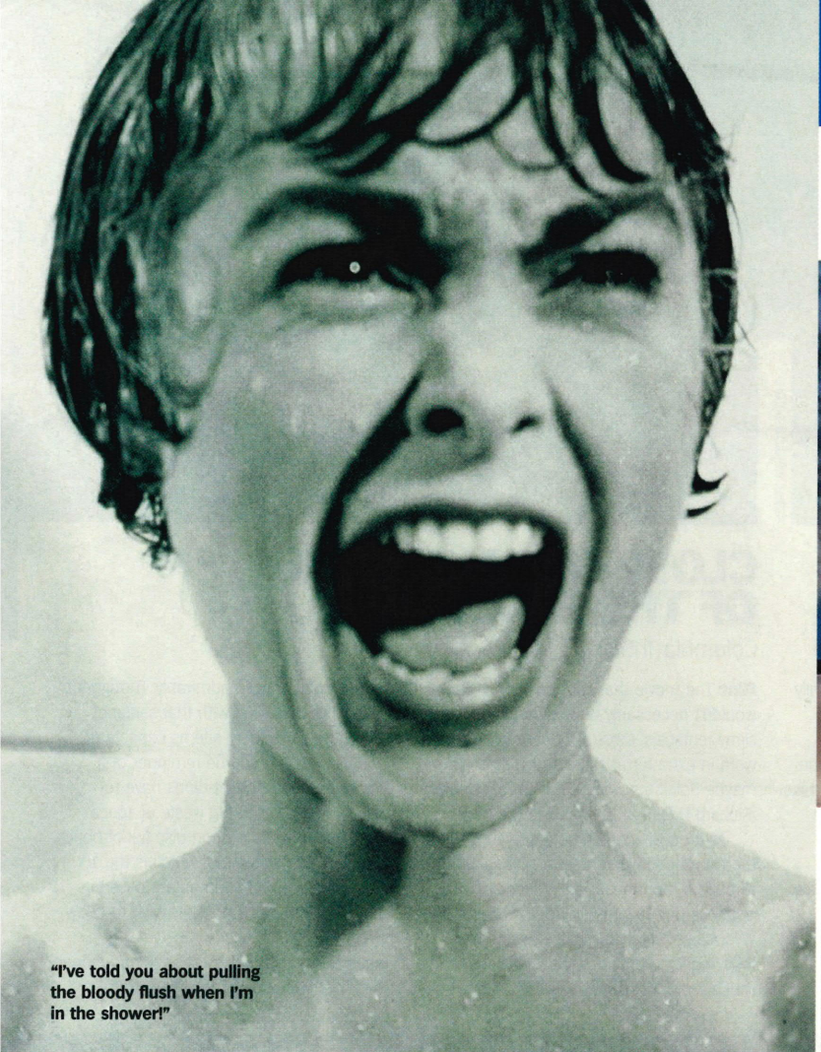
Film: Set in the near-future where animal cloning is a high street enterprise, the results for human replication aren't quite so successful, leading to the establishment of 'Sixth Day' laws banning any ungodly meddling in this area. But when Arnold Schwarzenegger survives a helicopter crash and returns home to find an identical Ahnoldt clone has taken his place, it's obvious someone has been breaking the new law. Once that same someone discovers the original Arnie is still alive, the hunt is on to terminate his existence.

Ironically, given its premise, *The Sixth Day* is just a clone of earlier, superior sci-fi movies: the Ahnoldt duplicate doesn't know he isn't the real thing (see Rachel the replicant in *Blade Runner*); huge conspiracies and confused identities (Arnie's own *Total Recall*). Even more ironic is the fact that a story with the capacity for fascinating psychological insights has been turned into a dumb-ass, predictable action film. A total waste of an intriguing idea.

Features: An isolated music track, ten short featurettes and two Re-Pet infomercials – amusing ads for the film's cloning company.

Verdict: Two Schwarzeneggers for the price of one? For God's sake, ban cloning immediately! **4/10**

» **ALSO RELEASED**
The Alfred Hitchcock Collection (Universal/£19.99 each)/**A Nightmare On Elm Street Boxset** (Entertainment In Video/£39.99) /**The Omen Trilogy Boxset** (Fox/£39.99) /**The Deerhunter** (Warners/£12.99/**Coyote Ugly** (Touchstone/£19.99)/**Red Planet** (Warners/£19.99)/**Vertical Limit** (Columbia/£19.99)



"I've told you about pulling the bloody flush when I'm in the shower!"

PHOTO: KOBAL COLLECTION

TOP 10 HORROR DVDS

Nosferatu
Eureka/£19.99
Film: One of the few silent movies that stands up to modern viewing. FW Murnau's classic interpretation of *Dracula* is the template for every vampire film that has followed. Max Schreck is unforgettable as the titular Nosferatu – chilling, tragic and utterly grotesque.
Features: Commentary. Two featurettes. Original artwork.

The Exorcist
Warners/£15.99
Film: Banned in the UK, picketed by Christians who felt it was Satanic and by Muslims who felt it was a recruitment ad for Christianity. Look beyond the controversy and this tale of possession is one of the few genuinely unsettling films ever made.
Features: Documentary. Interviews. Commentaries.

Psycho
Columbia TriStar/£19.99
Film: Hitchcock's shocker was a sensation in its day; breaking all the rules by killing its biggest star in the first half hour and pushing the boundaries of sex and violence. Even now when everyone knows the secret of Norman Bates and his mother, it's still the last word in cinematic psychosis.
Features: Production Notes. Trailer.

Peeping Tom
Warners/£12.99
Film: A boy subjected to experiments on the effects of fear grows up to be a killer obsessed with the concept of terror. His murder weapon is a camera with a lethal spike and a mirror attached so that victims can watch themselves being murdered. Originally banned, it remains a harrowing and intelligent classic.
Features: Photo albums. Trailer.

Night Of The Living Dead
Third Millennium/£15.99
Film: The first and best in George Romero's '*Dead*' trilogy is a masterclass in low-budget film-making. Under siege from hordes of zombies, seven people take up arms and fight for survival in an abandoned farmhouse.
Features: Featurette. Music video. Trailer. Photo gallery.

The Omen
Fox/£19.99
Film: Damien looks innocent enough but 666 (the number of You Know Who) marked on his head gives away the boy's true nature and explains why everyone who crosses him ends up dead. Cheesy but effective Seventies horror.
Features: Commentary. Documentary. Interviews.

Carrie
MGM/£15.99
Film: Brian De Palma's film is an abject lesson in never pissing off telekinetic girls when it's that 'time of the month'. And, along with *The Shining*, is only the second adaptation of a Stephen King supernatural novel to do its source justice.
Features: Trailer. Booklet.

A Nightmare On Elm Street
Entertainment In Video/£19.99
Film: Inspired by reports of teenagers dying in their sleep and based on the image of a vagrant who slept outside his house, Wes Craven revived the horror genre with his creepy creation Freddy Krueger (before turning him into a panto villain in the sequels). Previously Craven had shocked the world with the much-maligned classic, *Last House On The Left*.
Features: Cast and crew commentary.

π
Pathé/£19.99
Film: A movie concerned with Pythagoras and mathematical theorems may not seem the obvious basis for psychological horror, but this nightmarish story of a genius uncovering conspiracies beyond our comprehension is a truly mind-bending trip.
Features: Commentary. Deleted scenes. *Behind The Scenes* Montage. Music video.

The Blair Witch Project
Pathe/£19.99
Film: Overrated and over-hyped for sure, but *Blair Witch* certainly brings an original slant to the genre. Shot documentary-style and with all the horror left to the audience's imagination, it's refreshing to see creativity isn't entirely dead in modern cinema.
Features: Two documentaries. Newly Discovered Footage. Commentary. Interviews.

And the disembodied hand bade farewell to another satisfied customer...

SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE

Metrodome/£19.99/Out now

Film: The most famous of all vampire films, the 1921 classic *Nosferatu* was directed by genius director, FW Murnau and starred character actor Max Schreck as the grotesque blood sucker. As far as we know, not a single member of the production team was killed during filming. Until now.

Playing on the dictatorial reputation of Murnau and the mysterious Schreck, this ingenious horror/comedy creates an alternative reality where Schreck actually is a vampire – a tormented, tragic figure, despised and alone – and Murnau is the real monster – willing to sacrifice cast and crew to his leading man in his desire to make an authentic masterpiece. Expertly creating the look and feel of the original and then going off at bizarre tangents, *Shadow Of The Vampire* is a small triumph.
Features: Director's commentary and footage of the transformation Willem Dafoe underwent to become Max Schreck.
Verdict: A mixture of film history and total fiction, a must for horror buffs. **8/10**

"Is that a gun in your pocket or... Oh, it is a gun. Thanks for that."

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

MGM/£19.99/25 June

Film: Based on Akira Kurosawa's masterpiece *The Seven Samurai*, the story of swordsmen protecting peasant farmers against bandits in feudal Japan, becomes a story of gunfighters protecting peasant farmers against bandidos on the Mexican border. The fact that Kurosawa's film was inspired by Westerns probably explains why the tale translates to cowboy country so perfectly, resulting in a movie that almost (but not quite) matches the original.

Two years before directing *The Great Escape*, John Sturges set his template here of an all-star cast in a rousing, action-packed epic. Memorable for so many things: the recruitment of the Seven (including Yul Brynner as the leader and James Coburn as the knife expert); Steve McQueen's star-making performance, "We deal in lead, my friend"; the stunning climactic shoot-out; and all wrapped-up in Elmer Bernstein's peerless score, *The Magnificent Seven* is still as fresh and entertaining as the day it was made.
Features: A fascinating commentary from producer Walter Mirisch, assistant director Robert E Relyea, and stars James Coburn and Eli Wallach. Plus, the documentary, *Guns For Hire: The Making Of The Magnificent Seven* which covers the history of the production and features interviews with the cast and crew.
Verdict: Still stands as one of the all-time great Westerns. **8/10**

ALL DVD TEXT: LEE HART

The US Syncronised Shed-erecting team got in some pre-Olympics practice...

THE LONGEST DAY

MGM/£19.99/28 May

Film: The 6th of June, 1944. The day that marked the turning point in WWII. The day thousands of allied soldiers risked their lives on the Normandy beaches. The longest day.

Filmed in documentary-style with painstaking authenticity and respect for the men who gave their lives in the only worthwhile conflict of the 20th Century, *The Longest Day* is a worthy alternative to *Saving Private Ryan*'s visceral bloodshed. Following numerous plot strands and starring perhaps the most impressive ensemble cast ever brought together on film – John Wayne, Richard Burton, Henry Fonda, Rod Steiger and Sean Connery are just some of the big names on show – this is movie-making on a grand scale.

Features: *D-Day Revisited* is an hour-long documentary, filmed a decade after the release of the movie, featuring *The Longest Day*'s renowned producer Darryl F Zanuck.

Verdict: The D-Day landings recreated as both epic entertainment and important history lesson. **7/10**

"Now if I can just win this battle, I'll be back in the boozer by Tuesday."

PATTON

Fox/£17.99/18 June

Film: Arguably cinema's greatest ever biopic, the WWII exploits of America's most controversial army man, General George S Patton are portrayed in memorable fashion. No politician, Patton was a soldier who spoke his mind, enjoyed his booze and his women and never thought twice about upsetting a few apple carts. He was also an inspiring leader of men whose uncompromising attitude towards combat made him feared by both the Nazis and the American top brass.

George C Scott captures all the idiosyncrasies of the man in a truly astonishing, Oscar-winning performance (although he declined to accept the award). But as well as being a gripping character study, *Patton* is also a classic war film – boasting magnificent, realistic battle sequences as the General goes from defeat by Rommel at El Guentar to glorious victory at Messina.

Features: *The Making Of Patton* is a superb documentary which covers the production of the film and also has contributors like Oliver Stone discussing their enduring passion for the movie. Plus, Jerry Goldsmith's complete musical score and an audio essay about Patton's life and career.

Verdict: A compelling examination of a great General and a complicated, volatile human being. **9/10**

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5. I WANNA BE YOU	143149	V		V

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The Super Furries. On a beach. Practising *Play It Cool*. Without instruments.

Super Furry Animals

Wales' finest talk about their PS2-friendly enhanced DVD album.

On the eve of the historic simultaneous release on CD/DVD of their new album *Rings Around The World*, Super Furry Animals bassist Guto Pryce is in typically laid back but confident mood. "*Mwng* (last years low key Welsh language only album) was recorded and mixed in two weeks under financial constraints but with this one we went to town on the production side," he elaborates. Indeed, the album boasts a double first, with the inclusion on the PS2-friendly DVD album of a version mixed in Dolby 5.1. "If anyone's got a home cinema set-up, they're in for a treat. Nobody's made a record specifically for 5.1 before," enthuses Pryce. "We were like kids in the studio, with the sub-bass and being able to pan four ways, writing music with that in mind and watching films like *Apollo 13* to see how other people were using it."

No strangers to the visual medium, the band appeared 'in-game' in *Actua Soccer 2* for the *Play It Cool* single. (An SFA mode cheat even exists within the game. At the title screen, press ←(2), ◎, →(2), ◎, ↑ and then ↓). Another feature of the DVD project is the inclusion of twelve different films to accompany each track.

//"Nobody's ever made a record mixed in Dolby Digital 5.1 before," The Furries' Guto Pryce//

Do not however expect these to be pop videos. "They weren't treated as promos, they don't serve a promotional purpose. We tried to give the directors as much freedom as possible and asked them to be as extreme as they wanted," stresses Pryce. Band favourites include the accompanying work to *No Sympathy* from the Dogme collective – "...it's dark, it's nuts, it's just odd!" – and *Receptacle For The Respectable* by old band cohort and sleeve designer Pete Fowler. Other contributions come from the likes of The Ministry of Truth, Martin McCarthy and Dylan Jones. The DVD films can be seen in select towns at cinemas on the Friday night prior to Saturday gigs.

Also included are remixes by The High Llamas Sean O'Hagen and *OPS2*'s fave music anarchist, Kid 606, described in reverential tones by Pryce as, "American bleep merchants who deconstruct sound, then put it back together again. It's another direction that we wouldn't have taken ourselves, but that's the way you want remixes to go."

Hardcore fans of the Super Furries will also be pleased to learn that following the demise of former label Creation Records, and the bands subsequent signing to Epic, there will still be the odd release on their own label. "The deal with Epic gives us the freedom to keep releasing stuff on Placid Casual," Pryce explains. Resolutely uncommercial, yet charting with every release, Super Furry Animals are a band of contradictions, running rings around your world. ☐ **GD**

Rings Around The World (Epic)

Rings Around The World is the most complete Super Furry Animals album yet. Expansive, quirky, melodic and innovative as always, with production duties shared between the band and Chris Shaw.

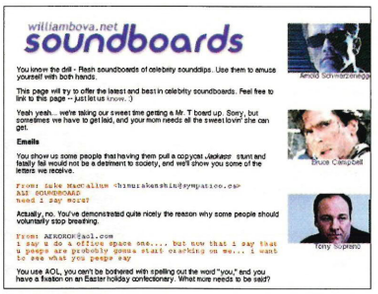
Guest appearances come from the likes of Paul McCartney, reprising his carrot crunching contribution to the Beach Boys seminal 1967 track *Vegetables*, by chomping on a stick of celery on *Receptacle For The Respectable*. Guto Pryce takes up the story, "We'd remixed some ambient music he'd made for one of his art exhibitions and I guess he was happy to return the favour". This audio pun probably isn't as random as it might seem, the spectre of Brian Wilson hovering over many of the songs. John Cale also appears on *Beautiful Mistake*, a re-recording of a collaborative film score.

**Rings Around The World is released on July 16 on Epic Records on DVD and CD formats.*

VIDEO GAME JAM

www.kontek.net/vgjam

Attempts at bringing videogame music into the mainstream range from embarassing to downright annoying. Thankfully, early Nineties 'dance' remixes of *Tetris* and *Super Mario Bros* have long been banished to the bargain bin in the sky and it's now more common for computers to be used to make music rather than making music out of the games. Thank God. Why this Web site wishes to change this is beyond us. Featuring guitar tablature of in-game tunes ranging from classics like *Double Dragon* on the NES to more recent titles like *Perfect Dark* on the N64 and *Final Fantasy IX* on the PSone, it gives bedroom guitarists the world over a chance to piss off parents, friends and neighbours with a badly played version of *Zelda: Ocarina Of Time's* theme. Imagine that – but with a distortion pedal turned up to ten. ☐ **GW**



SOUNDBOARDS

www.williambova.net/soundboard

"Who's your daddy and what does he do?" Austrian beefcake Arnie and *Evil Dead*'s Bruce Campbell are just two of the Hollywood elite who've been sampled for our collective delight in the form of touch and talk Web based soundboards. Where else can you hear Pacino shout "F*** you!" at his snarliest best or Tony Soprano grimly intone, "Here comes the Prozac!" among 65 choice character-specific others? The site is set to evolve over time but our current favourite is *Serpico*-Al. In staccato-mode, his tail-end pre-last word pause is an 18 carat gem in the near seminal "What. Are You. Going. To. Do. About. It... Asshole." It could easily bring the house down. We can't wait for Mr T... ☐ **IW**

THE TOP FIVE

The five best *Gran Turismo 3* Web sites.

1. **www.scea.com/games/categories/racing/gt3**
The official US site. Excellent for techy details.
2. **www.gran-turismo.com**
Unofficial, but a thorough hub for *GT3* obsessives.
3. **members.nbci.com/_xmcm/gt2kc/index.html**
GT3 Central is exhaustive and smartly written.
4. **www.uk.scee.com/gt3**
UK site with some great *GT3* movies and wallpapers. Keep an eye out for a whole lot more
5. **www.scei.co.jp/sd2/gt3a**
The Japanese 'daddy'. *GT3* otaku line up now.

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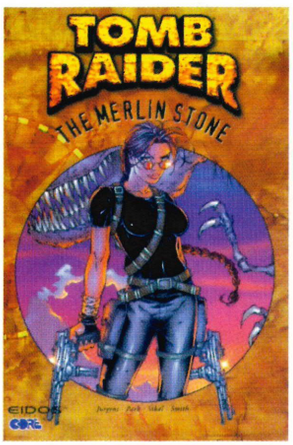
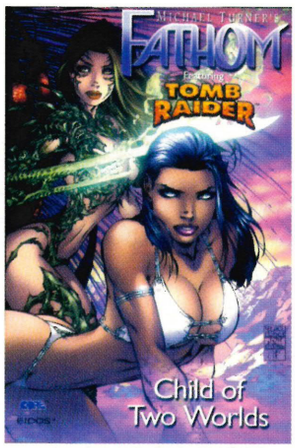




TOMB RAIDER: THE MERLIN STONE/ FATHOM: CHILD OF TWO WORLDS

Author/Artist: Various/Michael Turner/**Publisher:** Titan Books/ **Price:** £10.99/£12.99

With Lara Croft preparing to jump to a cineplex (and thus on a Pepsi cup) near you this summer, take time out to see that it's not only the fragrant Ms Jolie who can make Lara come alive. Compiled from the unit-shifting Top Cow comics, *Tomb Raider: The Fathom Stone* takes Lara ("If it's unique or exciting, I go after it") into a alternate dimension of angry dinosaurs, insane priestesses, Masonic societies and, of course, the odd cheesecake shot of Crofty in her shreddies. Scribe Dan Jurgens (*Superman*) keeps things going at a pace while Andy Park's pencils are typical Image-style eye candy.

The Merlin Stone might be a bit of a no-brainer, but Lara lovers should also check out her guest-slot in *Fathom*. Turner adds some Barry Windsor-Smith touches to his pin-up derived pencils for this latest fan favourite (a surfing super-heroine made out of, um, water) while his scripts have a little more brains to them than the visuals would suggest. As before, those requiring challenging superheroics in the style of *The Authority* will go disappointed but for those wanting good looks, decent plotting and babes in bikinis, *Fathom* is deep. ☐ **MG**

Mags we like

RUE MORGUE

Frequency: Bi-monthly/**Price:** CAN $6.95/**See:** www.rue-morgue.com

The downside to a brush with obsessive fan-fuelled magazines is that an encyclopaedic knowledge of their particular boat-floating passion usually overwhelms, pins to the floor and then throttles objectivity. Shock horror! Canada's premier horror mag, *Rue Morgue* is a different creature. Assembled on the cold slab of total devotion to its subject matter, the mag is written with a refreshing blast of perspective. Movies old and new, books, games and various objets d'aaaggghh are treated with respect, intelligence and humour. May/June's issue is a special tribute to Universal Studio's legendary monster movies of the Thirties to Fifties including a fascinating feature on Ben Chapman, the man behind the gills of 1954's *Creature from the Black Lagoon*. There may be a few too many death-grind and industrial-goth-synth album reviews for all but the most black hearted of fans but if you don't know Demonicon from your Entwine, you're probably not going to get lost in the pages of *Rue Morgue* after sundown in the first place. ☐ **PF**

Gaming content: Only one page per issue, but full on for *Onimusha*. Of course.

**We picked up our copy of* Rue Morgue *in the US as a spot of light relief from E3. Interested Brits should log onto www.rue-morgue.com to satiate their subscription blood lust*

TEXT: SAM RICHARDS

»MUSIC

Million cellar: Basement Jaxx hit the jackpot again.

SLEEVENOTES

Using the power of your PS2 with this month's best CDs.

BASEMENT JAXX Rooty (Virgin)

Who? Saviours of British house music, still cutting it up like DIY hip-hop punks from the backroom of an Irish pub in Brixton run by samba-loving dreads. That ruff.

Highlights: *Crazy Girl* is what Prince would be doing if he still had the balls, *Romeo* is number one on Mars and *Jus 1 Kiss* is pure 5am bliss.

Lowlights: The ludicrous surplus of good vibes leads to *Broken Dreams* being too cute for comfort.

Verdict: Even crispier, crunchier and crazier than *Remedy*, *Rooty* is the instant party mix of your feverish hallucinations. Shove that up your essential selection. **8/10**

RADIOHEAD Amnesiac (EMI)

Who? Cultured miserablists present their 'accessible' follow-up to *Kid A*. Except *Amnesiac* is actually just as dark and impenetrable. Ha ha, fooled you!

Highlights: The desolate tremors of *Knives Out* and *Morning Bell*. The mad mariachi funeral march of *Life In A Glasshouse* is on a planet of its own.

Lowlights: Yorke's vocal haemorrhaging verges on the unbearable. Come *Like Spinning Plates* you just want to pin the bugger down and force-feed him Haribo.

Verdict: *Kid A* without the electronics. Deeply affecting in places but arguably a *little too much*. It might never happen, y'know. **7/10**

N*E*R*D In Search Of (Virgin)

Who? N*E*R*D stands for No-one Ever Really Dies, the alter-ego for superstar hip-hop production team The Neptunes, architects of Kelis' awesome *Kaleidoscope* LP.

Highlights: Churning Seventies FM rock through the thug rap R&B blender, N*E*R*D vomit up a splatter of inventive psychedelic grooves. *Tape You*, now that's truly dirty.

Lowlights: Albums as forward-thinking as this don't have really have lowlights, just bits you don't realise you like yet.

Verdict: Filthy, groovy, funky, chunky, low down and dirty, N*E*R*D are the f**ked-up future, right here right now. The best thing since Outkast. **9/10**

FAITHLESS Outrospective (Cheeky/BMG)

Who? Rollo, Sister Bliss and Maxi Jazz bring their self-satisfied techno ecleticism to bear for a third time. Cover proves sense of hubris remains undimmed.

Highlights: As with any random run down the radio dial, unexpected treats like the Mayfield mimicry of *Muhammed Ali* can be found. You have to dig deep, though.

Lowlights: Maxi Jazz, a man who intones the feeblest of lyrics like he's reading a news story on AIDS victims. Around him, pompous trance fills the air.

Verdict: This stylistic mixed bag is worth a dip but, beware, everything is laced with po-faced pomp. Remember, one of these people is related to Dido. **3/10**

VARIOUS ARTISTS Tomb Raider OST (East West)

Who? Moby, Fatboy and Leftfield line up for the biggest movie soundtrack of the year so far. Assembled with all the loving care of a coked-up marketing exec.

Highlights: Nelly Furtado lending even greater depths of strange to Missy Elliot's *Get Ur Freak On*. The rest of the good tracks you should already own.

Lowlights: The slew of third-rate trancey big beat dross deemed necessary for accompanying scenes of Ms Jolie swinging from ropes and wrestling tigers.

Verdict: They've already dumped Michael Kamen's movie score, now they give you Nine Inch Nails. Still, will probably sound great in the cinema. **5/10**

» ALSO RELEASED

Missy Elliot Miss E ...So Addictive (Elektra)/**Mark Lanegan** Field Songs (Beggars Banquet)/ **Felix Da Housecat** Kittens And Thee Glitz (City Rockers)/**Super Furry Animals** Rings Around The World (Epic)/**Fused** Audio (Columbia)

HARDCORE

Tips, tactics, tricks, cheats. Want to rip your new games to shreds? Welcome to the section that's strictly for the HardCore...

Thanks to an unfortunate misunderstanding at the Quasar arena (see last issue's feature) my daylight and falafel privileges have been revoked, throwing me into a remorse laden tipping frenzy in the interim. How was I to know that tweaking the Quasar rifle with an industrial laser was against the rules? Still, they were going to redevelop that area at some point anyway. Apparently. But North London's loss is your gain with this month's HardCore boasting not one but two lovely game guides, along with all the codes and extras you've come to expect. So there's *MDK2 Armageddon, Crazy Taxi, Rumble Racing, Super Bombad Racing* and that's just for starters. Need I go on? No. I think that speaks for itself. Enjoy the spread, and I'll see you next month.

Paul Fitzpatrick
Staff Writer

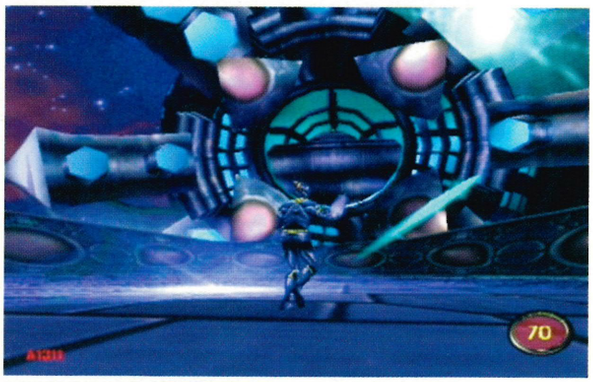
HELP ME!

If you've got any special requests for tips, hints, codes or advice (providing it exists) I'm your dutiful manservant. In fact it's just lovely to know there are people out there who know my name. One day I might be able to join the happy people like you. For now I'm content to just lend my services to make your gaming life that bit more enjoyable: Write to me at: **HardCore, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.** Electrical cyberpost to **PS2@futurenet.co.uk**.

MDK2 ARMAGEDDON

Come one, come all to our stroll through *MDK2*. Whether you keep getting knacked by SODs, can't get your atomic toaster to brown evenly or just want to know all the secrets of the game, our two part guide has something for you. This issue, we bring you the skinny on the first six levels and a guide to Dr Fluke Hawkins' DIY skills. More next issue!

LEVEL ONE



BEWARE THE HAND OF HANS
Character: Kurt
Edmonton is being attacked by the Alien Minecrawler. It's up to you to get down there and check out the situation.
Mini Game: Avoid the lasers and the homing missiles.

AREA 1
To exit this room simply snipe the Sniper Ball in the middle of the door. Sniper Balls appear a lot throughout *MDK2* and they trigger all sorts of goodies.

AREA 2
Upon entering this room go into Sniper mode and aim through the hole in the glass above the Bottrock. Shoot the target he is waving back and forth. You must kill him to open the door.

AREA 3
You will enter a large room high up on a ledge. Pick up the decoy and throw it off the ledge. This will keep the Poopsies below you busy. Launch yourself off the ledge and float to the bottom. Kill the Poopsy Generator first then turn your attention to the distracted Poopsies. Now enter Sniper mode and shoot the Sniper Ball under the low platform. Then use the fan to fly into the hole underneath the lower ledge. Shoot the boxes in this hidden room to reveal power-ups. Now go back to the fan and use it to fly onto the lower platform and exit the room. Before entering the next room, kill the two Spheres Of Doom (SODs) in the corridor.

AREA 4
There are three enemies in this room – two Bottrocks and a SOD. After disposing of these the Sniper Ball on the door will activate. Snipe the Sniper Ball to leave the room. Snipe out the two turrets in the corridor.

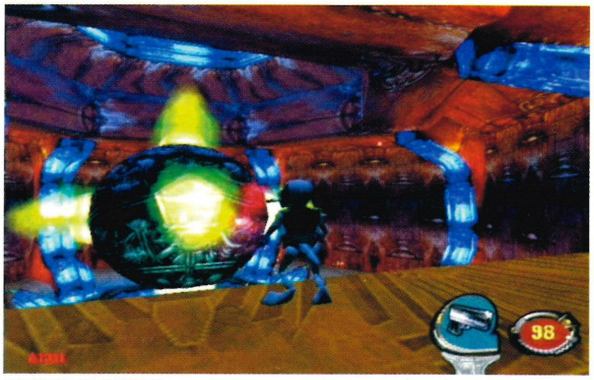
AREA 5
Equip the cloak and kill the two Bifs that are standing guard in this room. The best way to do this is to use the Sniper gun to target the eye that blinks sporadically from their belt buckles. Now go up the ramp near the end of the room and shoot the Sniper Ball that is inside the hole in the wall. After the Sniper Ball is sniped the door will open. There is also a Ham on the ledge past the Sniper Ball hole. Of course.

AREA 6
Go into Sniper mode and destroy the turrets and SODs in this room. There are six Sniper Balls that must be sniped before the fan will activate. Once the Sniper Balls have been shot the fan in the centre of the room will turn on. On the floor of this room there are homing shells that are useful against the Mantarays in the next room. Take the fan to the next room.

AREA 7
In this room get the Sniper Mortar and fire it into the hole at the top of the nearest dome. This will shatter it. Two Bottrocks will now drop down onto the platform. Enter Sniper mode and shoot the Bottrocks. Now jump to the next platform and deal with the second and third domes just like the first. After the third platform there is a long black tunnel. Run through it quickly, ignoring the turrets (you don't need to destroy them to progress). At the end of the tunnel there is a platform with a fan on it. Ride the fan to the next room.

BOSS FIGHT: HANS
The first part of this boss is a huge machine. Enter Sniper mode and shoot the four Sniper Balls in the centre of the machine. This will cause it to open up revealing another Sniper Ball in the centre. After that Sniper Ball is sniped the machine will open up again revealing the pilot, Hans. Shoot Hans three times and he will jump out. Now leave Sniper mode and finish off Hans with your Chaingun. After Hans is defeated a movie starts and you're one level closer to victory.

LEVEL TWO



WITNESS AN INFERNO
Character: Max
Kurt's got his hands full so it's time for Max, the six limbed robo-pooch to get some action.
Mini Game: Avoid the rocks.

AREA 1
Pick up the three magnums on the ground and use them to shoot the walls to the left and right of where Max's rocket crashed, as there are better weapons in the hidden rooms behind those walls. To proceed, shoot the wall where the rocket crashed, then shoot out the green door. Pick up the Uzis in the centre of the room. There will be two glass walls to the left and right. Shoot out the glass and then the flashing alarms near the ceiling. Now shoot the green domes that are on the ceiling. After the second dome is destroyed the wall barring the way will lift and a green door will appear. Shoot that too. If you take out the alarms the enemies will stop entering the room.

AREA 2
Run and destroy the walls that are blocking the way with your guns. There will be Poopsies and Samsmites attacking you. There will be a green door at the end of the room. Shoot it to leave.

AREA 3
This room is filled with Poopsies and Mantarays. Lucky you. There are three Poopsy Generators in the bunkers. Once you destroy all three generators the exit will open. Off you go now.

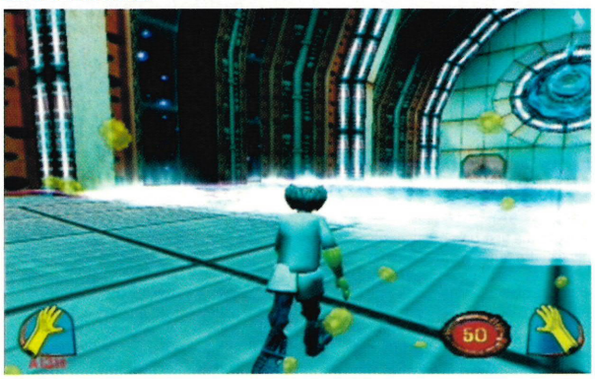
AREA 4
See the Jetpack? Pick it up and stand by the refueler. Once you're fuelled up, use it to fly through the circular doors above. There will be two turrets up there. Land on the ledge and strafe them until they're neutralised. This will trigger the next circular door above to open. You will have to do this three times. Fly to the platform with the refueler. Destroy the Bottrocks and the Generators, and don't stop moving, as there is a Bif shooting you from the platform above. After killing the Bottrocks refuel your Jetpack. There is a shotgun hidden in the hole above you so fly up to get it. Now fly to the platform with the Bif. Kill him and then fly through the circular doors above. Once again you're going to need to destroy some turrets before you can proceed. You know the drill: land on the ledge and strafe. Once the turrets are destroyed the next circular door above will open. You will have to do this three further times.

AREA 5
Shoot the locked green door. There are turrets in this corridor but there is no need to destroy them. Run to the door at the far end. The only enemy worth taking the time to kill is the Bif. Other than that, try to conserve ammo. Jump up the floating blue platforms. Don't waste any ammo on the Bottrocks behind the force field, as they are invincible. On the highest floating platform you will be able to see a refueler floating in midair. Jump to it. Hover beside it and refuel your Jetpack. Fly through the circular doors above your head. Land on the ledge and strafe and shoot. Once the turrets are destroyed the next circular door above will open. You will have to do this three times. Once you are up at the top there will be three doors, one will open, go through it and shoot the turrets there.

BOSS FIGHT: GENERATOR
Shoot the glowing pentagons first, but avoid the beams of light. Once all the pentagons are destroyed shoot the shell covering the generator. There are three different sequences for the generator – each can be avoided if you pay attention to the sequence. In the Red sequence the beams move diagonally so use your Jetpack. In the Blue sequence they spin horizontally in the air – a good time to fuel up – and in the Yellow sequence they make horizontal sweeps of the floor Once you destroy the beams the generator turns into a small point of light. Shoot it until it explodes.

WALKTHROUGH: PART ONE

LEVEL THREE



WHAT IS THE BFB?
Character: Dr Hawkins
Uh-oh. Now Max and Kurt are captured, their ship the Jim Dandy is under attack. It's up to Dr Fluke Hawkins to get creative with some household objects and defend the ship from the enemy infestation. (See Toast With The Most).

AREA 1
Follow the computer's instructions. Be sure to pick up all of the items in the room. The Toaster and Loaf are on the counter. There are two Mr Fizzys in the Refrigerator. The Sauce and the Towel are at the bar. Tutorial over, leave the room.

AREA 2
You'll come to a chamber with four coloured doors. Go into the white door. Collect the Towels by the sink. Run into the bathroom stall. This will allow you to receive the Pipes and the Hand Dryer. Leave this room. Don't forget to wash your hands! Back at the four coloured doors go through the blue door. Pick up the Duct Tape, and then exit this room.

AREA 3
Back to the four coloured doors. Go through the green door. Combine the Hand Dryer with the Pipes, and the Duct tape will combine automatically to create a Leaf Blower. Use the Leaf Blower to blow the Bottrocks into Kermit – the man eating plant. After he has made a (literal) meal of them the Leaf Blower will explode and give you the Pipes back. Kermit will give you the Atomic Toaster. The elevator will now open. Take it to the next room.

AREA 4
Use the Duct Tape to patch the hole in the pipe at the bottom of the room, the one with all of the water coming out of it. Do not fall into the water, as you will get electrocuted. After the leak has been fixed get the Cord and combine it with the Pipes. This will give you the Ladder. Find the spot with the 'x'. Use the Ladder here to climb into the ducts. Use the Ladder on the next 'x' spot you see to reach the top of this room.

AREA 5
As you enter this area go to the right, using your Ladder to cross the large gap, and walk along the long girder until you reach the end. Use your Ladder here to cross all the gaps to the right, and you will discover two hidden Mr Fizzys. Use the Ladder again to return to the long girder. Walk back along this girder, entering the first door you approach. In this room you must jump from girder to girder to reach the top of the room, being careful to kill the Poopsies above you with your Atomic Toast. When you reach the top, exit and drop down to the girder below. Move along this to reach the next room. Here you'll find a big lift. Jump on it. Face the wall, turn right and you'll see a pipe, jump onto this and go through the door. You'll come to more girders, jump onto the larger girder and walk left. Use the Ladder on the 'x' spot and repeat this exercise. From this girder, drop down into the room below. Follow the edges of the girders. Walk through the door, and use the elevator.

AREA 6
Run up to the room on the left and grab the Fishbowl and the Lighter. Then run back to the main room and pour the Fishbowl down the cracked pipe in the centre of the floor. You will briefly have control of the plucky little fish, Chuckleberry Fin! While in the fish maze take all right turns until you get to the big red button. Bump Chuckleberry Fin into the button to press it. Now back to the doctor. The wall in front of you will open. Kill the Poopsies and the Generator and take the lift to get to the upper platform. Go through the door on the far side and take the elevator up.

AREA 7
You must have the empty Fishbowl and the Duct Tape. Equip the Fishbowl and flick the switch at the back of the room. Watch out for the Bif. When the airlock begins to suck you out into space you will get the Magnets. Combine them with the Duct Tape to make Magnetic Boots. Once you make the Boots run straight towards the door on the other side of the air lock. There will be an alien ship firing at you. Dodge its shots to the best of your ability and do not stop until you make it into the far door. Take the elevator.

BOSS FIGHT: BFB
Shoot him with the Atomic Toast until he turns his blue shield on. Now flick the switches on both sides of the room. When the BFB is in the middle of the Electric Beam across the room press the red button. Repeat until you knock down his shield. Now you can either use Atomic Toast or the Electric Beam to finish off the BFB.

TOAST WITH THE MOST

Listed below are the various useful items and weapons that Dr Hawkins can either use as found, or create by combining objects dotted around his levels. You'll never look at toast in the same way again…

Anti-Gravity Boots	Magnets + Duct Tape
Atomic Toaster	Created by Kermit the man-eating-plant from the toaster. It has no effect by itself, but combines with the following items: ■ Atomic Toaster + Baguette = Guided Toast Missile ■ Atomic Toaster + Ladder = Electrical Shock ■ Atomic Toaster + Loaf = Atomic Toast Projectile ■ Atomic Toaster + Pumpernickel = Dry Toast Mortar
Duct Tape	Used to fix a hole in Level Three
Empty Fishbowl	Used in Level Three to prevent choking when the atmosphere is sucked out of a room
Explosion	The Sauce + Lighter
Fishbowl	Used in Level Three to start the Fish Game
Ladder	Pipes + Electrical Cord
Leaf (Alien) Blower	Pipes + Hand Dryer + Duct Tape
Lighter	Used to illuminate dark areas
Molotov	The Sauce + Rags. Add the lighter and you've got a functioning weapon
Mr Fizzy	Heals 50 points
Plutonium	When consumed it turns Doc into Hyde
Toast	Toaster + Loaf. The ship's computer will show you how to combine the Toaster and Loaf to make Toast, which restores one Health point to Dr Hawkins

LEVEL FOUR

THE SECRET OF SHWANG
Character: Kurt
Doc Hawkins beams Kurt to the Alien Ship orbiting the Earth. Now Max needs to be rescued!

AREA 1
Pick up the Sniper Shield in the far-left corner of the room behind the wall, then shoot out the window. Enter Sniper mode and kill the two Bifs in this room. Then pick up the Super Chaingun and the Ham. To exit the room shoot out the window on the other side.

AREA 2
There is a Sniper Grenade in the upper right room. A Cloak is beside the second blimp. Inside the blimp near the far wall is a secret room. After getting the items in the secret room drop to the floor and kill the Ultra Bottrocks and the Samsmites. The best way to accomplish this is to equip the Sniper Shield and shoot them from a distance. Destroy the Samsmite Generator. Then shoot the Sniper Ball under the Generator. This will unlock the door in the room. Now you can go to the next room.

AREA 3
Snipe all of the SODs from a distance. Make sure you pick up the Sniper Shields that are on both sides of the entrance (you must follow the walls to the outside of the structure). Snipe the Sniper Ball under the first fan and ride it to the first platform. Now shoot the four Sniper Balls that are in a row. Blue platforms will appear as you shoot them. Jump on the platforms. When you get to the last platform it will activate the Sniper Ball underneath the second fan. Shoot the Sniper Ball and jump onto the fan. Now look up. You should see three Sniper Balls above you. Shoot the middle one and ride the fan up to the blue platform that appears. Then snipe the last Sniper Ball and jump on the blue platform. Now ride the fan to the upper platform.

AREA 4
Snipe all three Sniper Balls floating in the vortex and use the air current generated from these balls to float up to the blue nooks in the wall. Do this to climb all the way to the top. When you are able to, destroy the SOD. To get the secret Cloak, enter each alcove all the way to the top and then return to the bottom one. The Cloak should be waiting there for you.

AREA 5
Kill the two Bifs. Don't jump off the edge! First, ride the fan on the right to the upper platform. Float into the secret room and grab the items there. Return, then go to the room on the right side. It's full of doors with a '?' on them. Once you enter this room, the lights will go out and the room will spin so you won't know which way is out. The '?' doors will give you power-ups or a damaging smack in the chops at random. After you discover the exit, go through the door to the theatre.

AREA 6
There is a Bif, a Grunt, a Bottrock, and a Conehead on the stage. Kill them and run onto the stage. Move from side to side (Dance) while in the spotlights until the Bottrocks in the audience break the glass in front of them. The wall behind you will break revealing a door.

AREA 7
There are Bottrocks, Poopsies, and Mantarays in this room. You must destroy the three Poopsy Generators here to unlock the door. In the middle of the room is a fire pit with three Bifs around it. Kill the Bifs and jump into the middle of the pit. Open your parachute and ride the air current into a secret room – be careful as the updraft is only in the centre of the hole. Pick up all of the power-ups then go to the door on the opposite side of the room.

AREA 8
There are four pipes in this room, one on each wall. They all have a turret attached to them. On the floor there are two Bifs beside a fan. Kill all of the enemies in the room and shoot the Sniper Ball under the fan. Ride the fan into the pipe to the left of the entrance. Go through the door at the end.

MDK2 ARMAGEDDON continued

LEVEL FOUR continued

AREA 9
This room has a pit and two Sniper Balls on either side of the entrance out of view. You must obtain the Bouncing Sniper Bullets and bounce them off the walls to hit the Sniper Balls. Stand on both small ledges, and shoot where indicated. Once both Sniper Balls have been sniped, a bridge will raise to help you cross the pit.

BOSS FIGHT: SHWANG
Shwang's first form hangs over the gazebo. You must jump to avoid his ground slap and strafe to avoid his eye shots. You must snipe Shwang in the eyes, or just aim your Chaingun at his eyes. Hit him in the eyes three times and the gazebo will then shatter and a pit will form between you and Shwang. Snipe his hand, as indicated by the flashing circle, until he releases Max. Now enter Sniper mode and snipe any switches on the far wall, as Shwang gets close to them, causing a big laser blast to hit him. Continue sniping the switches until Shwang is dead.

LEVEL FIVE

More Shwang
Character: Max
The evil Schwang has abandoned his Mine Crawler and has hijacked the Jim Dandy. Max makes his way to the ship, hackles raised and ready for a fight.
Mini Game: Avoid the rocks and the alien ship debris.

AREA 1
Pick up the Uzis then shoot the cracked floor in the middle of the room. When you get to the room with the spinning beams, shoot the four computer terminals hanging from the ceiling at the edge of the room. This will stop the beams and open a grate in the floor. Drop through the floor, then keep shooting the grates on the floor and dropping down. Kill the two Bottrocks and the Generator. To get a surprise left by the game's developer shoot the computer terminal above the door, (you cannot do this from the floor, so when you fall from the last section you must land on the edge) and when the platform raises, shoot the eyepiece and look into the telescope. To finish the room shoot the floor out from under it.

AREA 2
Dispose of all the enemies in your path until you get to the duct at the end of the room.

AREA 3
Shoot the grates and pick up the Uzis. Then when you get to the lab shoot the control panels at the back of the huge green tubes. This will cause the tubes to shatter and the floating platforms to activate. Kill the enemies that spawn and keep shooting the control panels and riding the platforms up until you get to the top of the room. Shoot out the grate on the wall and enter the duct. Fall to the bottom of the Hub. Avoid the Fire Samsmites and run into the white door. Run all the way down the corridor and into the bathroom. There are two Poopsies in here. Kill them and then shoot the breakable walls. A hole will open up in the wall for you to fall into.

AREA 4
Run through the duct maze. Shoot the Fire Samsmites as they appear. The brown wall with the crack in it can be shot away and reveals two hidden shotguns. The exit is a collapsing corridor with Gatguns in it. Run to the right side of the room and climb the large boxes while avoiding shots from the Bottrocks. Shoot the grate covering the duct and run into the duct. When you get out of the duct you will see a wall with a big crack in it and light coming out of the crack. There are hidden Guided Rockets if you climb up to the duct to the right of the wall with the crack in it. Go back to the wall with the crack and shoot it. Follow the girders down the shaft.

AREA 5
Grab the Jetpack and hover beside the refueler as it slowly flies around the room above the lake of plutonium. It will eventually make its way to a pipe. Fly up the pipe. The floor in the little corridor will shatter under you if you are in Hard or Jinkies. If so, you could try to fall onto the big pipe under you. You must then navigate across the lake of plutonium. Jump from floating debris to floating debris, killing enemies as they spawn in to attack you. Alternatively, you could use the short cut, but only if you have enough fuel to fly over the break in the corridor, or you are playing on Easy or Medium. This route allows you to walk across the pit. Shoot the wall at the end of the corridor and fall onto the big pipe under you.

BOSS FIGHT: BAD MAX
Run to the refueler on the ground and fill up your Jetpack. Then grab as many weapons as you can and head for the duct maze near the ship's engine. Stand near the Car Battery in the maze and unload your weapons on Bad Max as he approaches. (Tip: You take less damage from running into Bad Max than you take from his guns and you become invincible for a few seconds. So every time you stop flashing run into Bad Max again before he shoots you.) When you become low on health take the Car Battery to fill up. When Bad Max is nearly defeated he will run to the main platform. Grab as many guns as you can and fill up your life. Then follow him to the platform and run around him in a circular pattern while shooting him. If you have less than 100 health immediately break off your attack and go and get the Car Battery in the maze. Do this until he is defeated.

LEVEL SIX

DR HAWKINS AND...MR HYDE?
Character: Dr Hawkins
Big ugly BFB has planted bombs around the Jim Dandy. Can Dr Hawkins defuse them all in time?

AREA 1
Walk to the first bomb. Once it is activated a timer will begin to count down. Let the timer reach zero and your ship will blow up. One of the rings on the bomb will be red. To disarm the bomb you must follow the cord that is attached from the red ring to a blue button. If you stand and wait, a beacon will travel along the cord, making the button easier to locate. Once you find the correct button, step on it. This must be done for all four rings on the bomb. Go through the blue door. This room is the ship's bridge. There are Hosers in here to kill, as well as some power-ups. Return to the Hub and go through the green door. Jump from platform to platform. Do not take too long as the platforms will fall into the bottomless pit shortly after you jump on them.

AREA 2
Disarm the second bomb using the same method as for the first bomb and use the ladder to climb over the pit to reach the buttons. Then run to Kermit. He will throw you some plutonium. Drink it to turn into Hyde. As Hyde you will easily be able to kill the Poopsies. After they're dead Kermit will open up the door to the next room for you.

AREA 3
Disarm the third bomb using the same method as for the other two. Once this bomb is disabled the door to the next room will open.

AREA 4
To disarm the fourth bomb it helps if you use the lighter to see where the wires go because some of the areas in this room are very dark. Following the beacons is also a handy way to find the correct buttons. Once this bomb has been disabled the elevator will be accessible. Use it to reach the next room.

BOSS FIGHT: BFB REMATCH
The BFB will be hovering above pitching grenades at you and using his Left Brain Attack. Shooting him with Atomic Toast at this point is useless, as a shield protects him. Drink the plutonium to turn into Hyde. You must climb up the tall stack of boxes heading for the red arrow at the top of them. Now follow the dotted path when it appears to jump onto BFB's head. You must jump on him three times to take down his shield. Once his shield is down he will float near the ground throwing bombs. Use the Atomic Toaster to finish him off.

Check back next issue for the remaining four levels

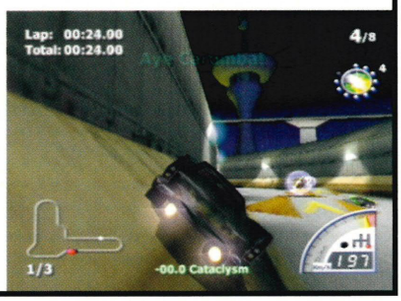
RUMBLE RACING

Car and Level Passwords
To enter the following passwords, choose the Game Options menu from the title screen. From here go to Load/Save and select Passwords. Enter the passwords below to open the corresponding vehicles and features.

PASSWORD	CAR	TRACK	CUP
P1PROC1PU	Cataclysm Vehicle	Falls Down Track	Pro Cup 2
Q2PROC2YT	EsCargot Vehicle	The Gauntlet Track	Pro Cup 3
AEPPROPUC	Road Kill/Elite Class Vehicle	Surf and Turf Track	Elite Cup
ILETEC1MB	Jolly Roger Vehicle	Coal Cuts Track	Elite Cup 2
ILCTEC2VB	Malice Vehicle	Wild Kingdom Track	Elite Cup 3

Just the Cars

PASSWORD	CAR
UBTCKSTOH	Buckshot Vehicle
BSUIGASUM	Gamecus Vehicle
HGIROLREL	High Roller Vehicle
KCEROCTEC	Redneck Rocket Vehicle
PTOATRTO1	Revolution Vehicle
ABOGOBOGA	Road Trip Vehicle
OPSRTISUC	Sporticus Vehicle
AMHBRAAMH	Stinger Vehicle
VTYANIYTT	Van Itty Vehicle
1AREXT1AR	Vortex Vehicle
NALDSHHSD	XXS Tomcat Vehicle



ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2002

Unlock Bonus Teams
To unlock the two special bonus teams (the Dingers and the Islanders) simply select the Exhibition mode and tap L1+L2 at the team selection screen. If you hear a gong sound, you've been successful. If you don't hear the gong keep tapping the keys till it works.

Unlock Dingers in Batting Practice
To unlock the Dingers in Batting Practice enter that mode and then press R2+R1+L2+L1 at the Team selection screen.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

Full Ammo Code
Just a quickie. During the game you can press the START button and then enter: ←,→,○,○,○, →,←
When you hit the last button in the sequence you'll be taken back to your game with a full ammo load-out.

GAUNTLET DARK LEGACY

Whether re-living past *Gauntlet* glory or getting to grips with Midway's arcade, sword and sorcery marathon for the first time, chances are you won't want to miss these play enhancing cheats. To make them work, all you have to do is enter the code of your choice as the player name. Easy, but it also means you can only use one cheat at a time.

EFFECT	CODE
$10,000 Gold each level	10000K
Nine potions and keys each level	ALLFUL
Invincible Character	INVULN
Invisible Character	000000
Floating Character	1ANGLI
Big Character	DELTA1
Three-Way Shot Character	MENAGE
Turbo Character	PURPLE
Extra Speedy Character	XSPEED
X-Ray Character	PEEKIN
Supershot Character	SSHOTS
Rapid Fire Character	QCKSHT

Secret Costumes
Each of the codes below triggers a new costume for the corresponding character. As above, you enter them in place of a player name.

CHARACTER	COSTUME CODES
Dwarf	NUD069, ICE600
Jester	STX222, PNK666, KJH105
Knight	CSS222, STG333, RIZ721, ARV984, SJB694 BAT900, DIB626, KAO292, TAK118
Valkyrie	AYA555, CEL721, TWN300
Warrior	MTN200, RAT333, CAS400
Wizard	DES700, GARM00, GARM99, SUM224, SKY100

Lazy Name Entry
If you enter an 'x' instead of a player name, the PS2 will step in and give your character a name of its own. But since the selection is limited to Larry, Chuck or Chip, you may want to choose your own to avoid being laughed at by the undead.

STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING

Unlock Boba Fett
Want to play everyone's fave bounty hunter and Sarlaac buffet item? Well enter the following code at the main menu then: □,○,△,○,□

A message will tell you that Boba Fett has replaced your character. Now all you have to do is choose any racer from the selection screen and when the race begins you'll be at the controls of Slave 1.

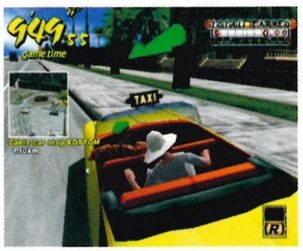
Unlock Trade Federation Battle Tank
To race as a pint-sized version of the battle tank just enter this code at the main menu: ○,△,□,○, △,□

Once again, choose your desired racer and when the race begins you'll be in a battle tank.

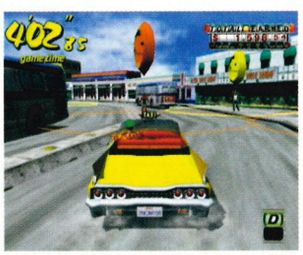
CRAZY TAXI

CRAZY TAXI GUIDE PART ONE: GENERAL TIPS

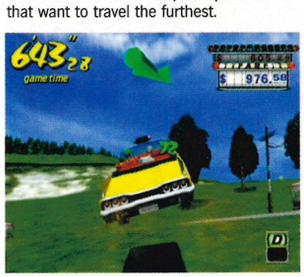
Crazy? For sure. But there's method to all the fare scaring madness. Over the next couple of issues we'll be getting down to the nuts and bolts of Sega's arcade blast giving you the inside edge on everything from hidden punters to Crazy Zig Zag. This month we bring you the essential tips that will have you notching up cash in no time.



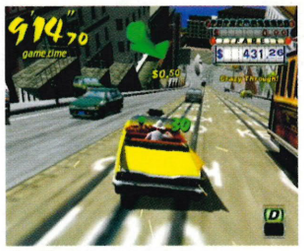
Picking Up Punters
Always stop as close as possible to each customer. If they have to run, you have less time to drop them off, and they yell at you. Obvious, but it's easy to think a couple of extra metres don't matter. They do. If you know where the passenger is heading, try to face in that direction when you stop, preferably with a Crazy Drift. If you are not sure, hedge your bets and stop halfway between the two directions. Both courses are complete circuits, so the best way to play is to continuously complete laps. On the arcade track, this means you must go through town, along the freeway, to downtown, to the bus terminal and round to the university again. It makes sense then to try and pick up fares that won't have you backtracking.



The Colour Of Money
All potential customers have their own colour code corresponding to the distance they want to go and therefore the potential earnings you can make from picking them up. Look out for the Green customers, they travel the farthest and pay the most, while Reds go the shortest and pay the least. For maximum earnings your customer priority should be: Green, Lime, Yellow, Orange, Red. NB Some customers change colour. For example, at the bus terminal some will switch from Red to Yellow. Again, use the colour codes to pick up the ones that want to travel the furthest.



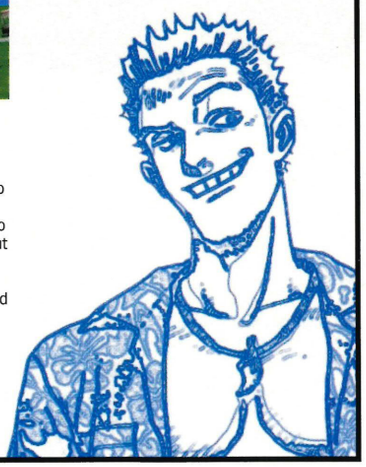
Driving Tips
The green arrow does not necessarily point out the fastest route from starting point to destination, and there are plenty of sneaky short cuts if you are prepared to go hunting. On the arcade track, for example, if you're trying to get from KFC to the heliport, ignore the big s-curve and cut straight up the grassy hill instead. When continuing onto the baseball stadium, practice your Crazy Drift jumping skills and leap off the edge of the hairpin bend rather than going all the way around it.



Tips Tips
Every time you pull off a Crazy Hit trick, a tip is added to your fare. Crazy Hits then link into combos until you have a front-end collision with another vehicle when they reset. Good places to rack up the tips are: following the cable car going down the hill and on the freeway. It's worth remembering that your tips are doubled if you drive on the wrong side of the road. When you drop your punter off they will give you a tip based on your remaining time. You usually get $6 for every full second of time that's left. So speed is your best friend.

Hidden Customers
Each hidden customer you pick up on the Arcade track should net you $2,500-$4,000. Here's how to find them.

1. Not strictly hidden, but at the beginning of the game, instead of driving forward, hit reverse. Pick up the woman directly behind you and she will pay you for a ride right to the bottom of the hill. Easy money.
2. At the hotel/crown area, look between the two buildings near the intersection. You should be able to see a tennis player, who wants to go to the tennis court. Game, set and match – your wallet.
3. Past The Levi's Store, you should see a multistorey car park. Drive up the ramp, hug the left side, and pick up the old lady on the rooftop. She wants to go all the way to the police station. Bless.
4. On the beach, or more accurately just offshore, there are three customers waiting patiently for a cab. Under the waves. Right.
5. When you reach downtown, take the ramp on the right side of the theatre on the middle street. Jump over to the rooftop, and p-p-p-p-p-pick up a punk.



WIN! LA-Z-BOY COMPETITION

Win a fantastic luxury LA-Z-BOY recliner, plus a PlayStation 2 and five games worth £2000!

Mr George Walter scores another classic goal in *Winning Eleven 5* while sat in his LA-Z-BOY. First time for everything...

STILL PLAYING THE LATEST PS2 games on a rubbishy sofa, patched up with gaffer tape and bits of old paisley curtains? Forget that. Thanks to the exceptionally lovely people at LA-Z-BOY UK who manufacture the chair for Europe, *OPS2* is proud to offer one lucky reader the chance to own an incredibly cool LA-Z-BOY recliner chair and a brand new PlayStation 2 complete with five top games – a fabulous prize worth over £2000!

The Michigan-based LA-Z-BOY company is famous throughout the world for producing furniture that combines incredible comfort with a unique range of luxury additions. The black leather Oasis – expertly slouched in by *OPS2*'s very own lazy git, George – is the first ever recliner to feature a drinks cooler built into the arm of the chair, with room for up to six 330ml cans of ice cold 'drink'. We repeat, that's a drinks cooler built INTO a chair!

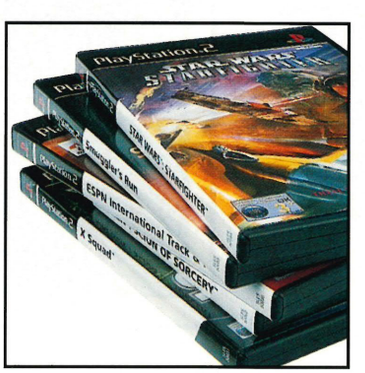
But that's not all. The LA-Z-BOY Oasis also includes an amazing three point massage and a heating system, so any problems of 'gaming arse' after a lengthy PS2 session will be banished forever. Finally, there's an optional telephone, a cup holder, fully reclining back support and a three-position footrest. The Oasis is the ultimate treat for any couch potato and along with a fantastic PlayStation 2 and five – YES! FIVE! – top titles, this has to be the dream come true of any gamer with way too much time on their hands.

So what do you have to do to win one of the world's bestselling recliners and prevent a member of the *OPS2* team from whisking it away to their penthouse flat? Easy – just answer the following question and then complete the tie-breaker in no more than 15 words.

1. WHICH FAMOUS US COMEDY SERIES HAD AN EPISODE IN WHICH CHANDLER AND JOEY FELL IN LOVE WITH THEIR LA-Z-BOYS?

2. I WOULD LIKE TO PLAY PS2 GAMES SAT IN A LA-Z-BOY BECAUSE... (NOT MORE THAN 15 WORDS)

Write your answers on a postcard and send your entries to: LA-Z-GEORGE Competition, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or you can simply email your answers to us at PS2@futurenet.co.uk with the subject marked 'LA-Z-BOY Competition'. See below for competition rules.



Competition Rules

No purchase necessary. No correspondence will be entered into. No employees of Future Publishing, LA-Z-BOY UK or any affiliated company may enter. No cash alternative is offered to these prizes. Closing date is 18 July 2001. If any prize becomes unavailable, Future Publishing and LA-Z-BOY UK reserve the right to replace it with another of equal value. Multiple entries will be disregarded. The Editor's decision is final. All normal competition rules apply. You heard.

Q&A

You got questions? We got answers! Send all your queries, questions and quandaries on PS2 tips, release dates, technical issues and just about anything else to Hardcore Q&A at the usual address, or spacepost them via the Interweb at PS2@futurenet.co.uk.

WHALE BAY WORRY

Please, please help! I am stuck on *Rayman Revolution*. I've got to rescue Carmen the whale from Whale Bay and I can't find her anywhere. When I first go in, I kill the two metal pirate things, but there is nothing to do and nowhere to go after that. I've looked and looked but I just can't find Carmen. Where is she?
Tina, via email

What you need to do is go into the sea, to the left of Carmen's cage and you'll find the entrance to a cave. Go in here. When you reach the surface again you'll find yourself inside a building. You need to get to the position above Carmen's cage. When you do you'll find the switch that releases your blubbery friend. Now all you need to do is exit the building and follow Carmen as she makes her escape. Be sure to breath the bubbles of air she leaves in her wake. Greenpeace would be proud.

PC USB PS2 HDD?

I've just paid a fortune for a PC broadband connection, I also own a PS2:
1. Will my current PC USB modem be of any use for my PS2 or will it only support its own specially made modem?
2. Will my current broadband connection (ADSL) be of any use or will I have to obtain a new account from a specialised provider?
3. Are you serious that the PS2 Hard Drive/Ethernet unit will cost only £200?
Simon Robbrecht, Belgium

1. The USB port may be common between your PS2 and PC but alas you won't be able to use your PC modem through the PS2 due to software differences. There will be dedicated PS2 USB modems for those who don't want to shell out for Sony's own HDD/Broadband unit but they're likely to be hitting European shelves after the Hard Drive (due over here in the Autumn).
2. If you have an ADSL Internet connection set up then that line will just as happily carry PS2 data as it does PC data. You will, however have to have a separate account with the PS2 Internet Service Provider when that is announced. For the very latest info on Sony's broadband plans for PS2 (and for the answer to question three) see our piping hot news round-up on page 39.

DESPERATELY SEEKING ZOE

I'm stuck on *ZOE*. Call me stupid but I can't find this bloody robot that I am supposed to control to get inside the EPS.2 bit. I've searched all the levels a few times, killed everything and even started smashing up the buildings, just because they look pretty. Where is the bloody thing?
Jack Donbavand, via email

Assuming you've picked up the Raptor control program in the tunnels that spread out from the edge of the EPS.1 map, you should go straight to Town.1. The downed and damaged Raptor is lying on a bank with another more knackered mech towards the centre of the area. You should be able to spot it from the sparking coming off its damaged frame. Approach the Raptor and as you do, the control program will kick the enemy mech into life. You now have control of a Class 4 Raptor and can get into EPS.2.

QUESTION(S) TIME

1. If I took the 11 pin SCART adaptor which is connected to the AV cable and connected a 21 pin SCART adaptor to the AV cable, would the picture quality be any better?
2. When will the upgrade discs be coming out? How much will they cost and what will they have to offer?
3. If I put another region DVD in my PAL PS2 will it play at all?
4. Is there any chance the PSone driver can be upgraded so you can save the texture and disc speed settings instead of changing them every time you want to play a PSone disc?
5. Seeing as your demo disc is a DVD-ROM, is there any chance of you putting more stuff on it such as movie trailers, game cheats, Yabasic games and of course more playable demos?
John Dinette, Combs

1. No. That's because the cable leading up to 21 pin adaptor would be still a composite cable. You can buy a 21 pin SCART lead to play games on your PS2, but it will give you anti-piracy 'green screen' if you use it to play back DVDs.
2. No official word on when upgrades will be available, but when they are they will come in one of three ways. First, with new hardware such as the Sony DVD remote. Secondly, preinstalled on the PS2 or as a free disc available to owners.
3. No. The PS2 is a citizen of Region 2, along with its cousins in the rest of Europe, Japan, the Middle East, Egypt, South Africa, and Greenland.
4. For now you're going to have to change the settings each time you start a PSone session on your PS2. Resetting the machine won't wipe the information but turning off the power will.
5. We're already ahead of you, John. We'll always bring you the best playable demos and video previews around (check out this month's disc for proof of our commitment to that!), but we have plans for a lot more besides. Interviews, reports, trailers... All of these are on the cards.

BATTERING VRAM

I was just wondering what VRAM is and why PS2 has only 4MB when the Dreamcast has 8MB. I thought when making a new console all aspects of it were supposed to be better. What was the point in making it smaller?
Jake Machay, Ripley, Surrey

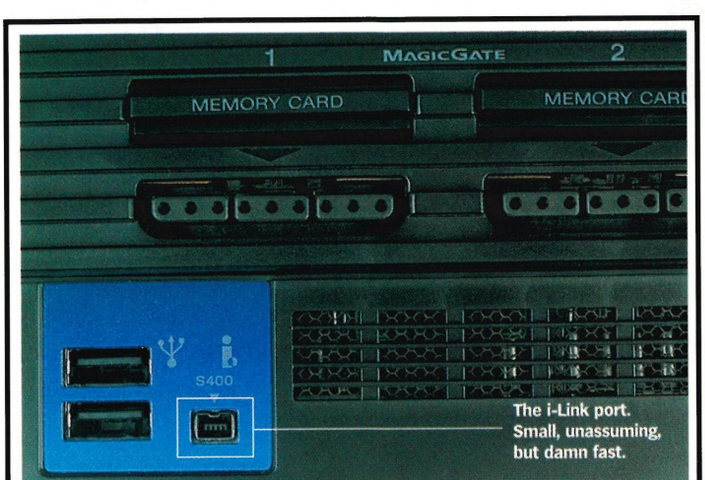
VRAM stands for Video Random Access Memory. It's a block of memory separate from but connected to a computer/console's main RAM and is positioned between it and the display. As you'd imagine VRAM's sole job is to store and churn out graphical data. VRAM makes high frame rates in games possible because it's dual ported. Put simply this means that the TV is able to read one game image from the VRAM while the next image is transferred from the processor. (It's important to note here that the VRAM doesn't actually create the graphics. In PS2 that's the job of Sony's spangly Graphics Synthesiser™.)

So why does PS2 have 4MB and not, say 16MB? There are two reasons. First off, for most graphics heavy processing duties a VRAM block of just 2MBs is perfectly adequate. So the PS2's 4MB is more than capable of handling the traffic of images it's given, especially given the second reason. PS2's VRAM is of a new type called (wait for it) DRDRAM. For tech heads this stands for Direct Rambus Dynamic Random Access Memory. For the rest of us, this is why it's special. DRDRAM has a wider pathway – or BUS – between it, the Graphics Synthesiser and the TV than regular Video RAM which means that more data can pass along it at any given moment. And since eight different 'jobs' can pass through the DRDRAM at once it allows for 'streaming' of data which translates to gorgeous real-time animations and seamless 3D graphics. This also means that there's less need for a large block of memory to store graphics 'in the wings' as it were. And that's why PS2 kicks Dreamcast ass with less VRAM.

BASIC NEED

I wonder if you can tell me when you're planning to run a feature on Yabasic? Also, why is your PSone section not as comprehensive as *OPM*'s section on PS2? I understand that the current software content coming out on the PSone isn't that great. However, I would like to know about any big changes or new games.
Jack Bernard, by email

Yabasic? Turn to p141 my friend and luxuriate in the subroutine splendour that is our first monthly Yabasic column. But before you do, a word about our PSone coverage. There are great games coming out on PSone and rest assured we'll review the cream of the crop as we always have. OPM's PS2 section is larger for the simple reason that the new machine is in the early stages of its life span and understandably has the majority of the developers' attention. It's as simple as that. How does everyone else feel – more or less? □



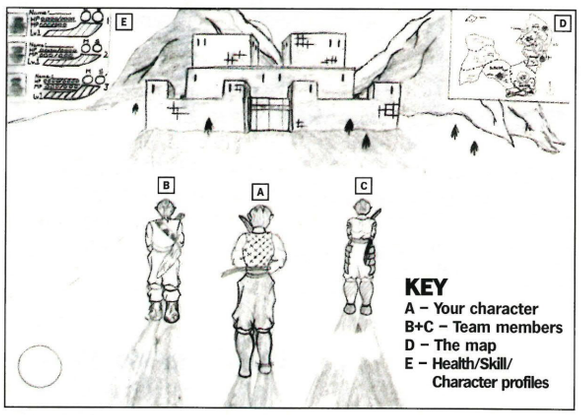
YOU WHAT?

The clammy fog of ignorance blasted by our leaf blower of applied wisdom. This month, the question is, "What's that i-Link port for?"

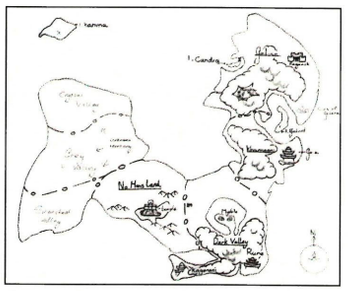
The i-Link is Sony's PS2 enhanced version of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers 1394 High Performance Serial Bus. It enables extremely fast transfer of information (400 MB per second) between your console and a host of available and planned peripherals like digital video cameras (imagine downloading your home movies to the PS2 Hard Disc Drive and editing them). With the i-Link's impressive capacity it can also cope with the massive amounts of data found in game graphics – *Gran Turismo 3* uses the i-Link port to connect six PS2s together with no slowdown!

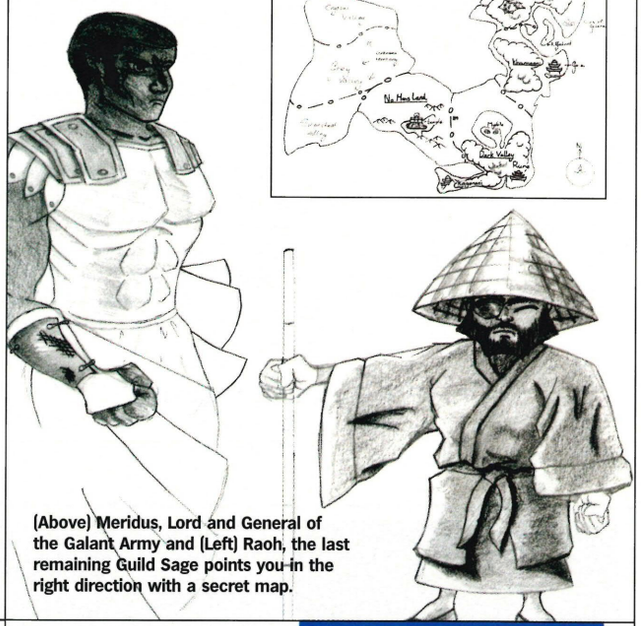
ENDGAME

Opinion/gossip/lists/columns/truths/lies/odds/sods/and some stuff you write



Questing the ancient land for hidden crests is the order of the day.





(Above) Meridus, Lord and General of the Galant Army and (Left) Raoh, the last remaining Guild Sage points you in the right direction with a secret map.

Designer Genes

Got an idea for a game? Let us know about it. This month's Designer Genes is epic sword and sorcery swashbuckler *Errant Souls*: an RPG grail-fest set in the ancient land of Ellyssee.

WRITE TO:
Designer Genes, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email us at **PS2@futurenet.co.uk**. Send us a description of your game idea and try to accompany it with a few sketches or drawings to bring your words to life. If we like your idea we'll send you an *OPS2* T-shirt and a signed print of the box art designed by art luvvie, Niki.

#9: ERRANT SOULS: HAND OF GOD/DESIGNED BY: SIMON G MBUGUA, SURREY

"Long, long ago on the island of Ellyssee there was the great city of Galena, governed by a King and eight sages known as The Guild. One of the sages (with the help of a demonic presence and the dark arts) rebelled against the King by creating a gauntlet of infinite destructive power called the Hand Of God.

"Fortunately, the Guild sensed the demonic presence and decided to attack and the Eighth Sage was forced to manifest himself in spiritual form and revert to becoming one with The Hand Of God.

"Unaware, The King decides he wants the Hand Of God for himself. Slowly the Eighth Sage consumes the King's soul and possesses his body. Mad with anger, The King vents his rage on the good people of Galena and in the act of taking his own life forces the renegade sage to revert to possessing the Hand Of God. This time, the remaining Guild Sages decide to hide the possessed relic deep within a ruined temple.

"Years pass, the temple is discovered and different power hungry factions compete to find the eight crests needed to open the temple door.

"You play one of five characters summoned by Raoh, the last of The Guild with a map to seven of the crests. Bounty hunters, crest guardians and assassins all pop up to talk rubbish/hamper/help/try to kill you.

"*Errant Souls* plays like *Zelda 64* and looks like *Oni*. Like most RPGs you acquire battle points (EXP), money, scrolls and skill points. As you progress, you'll learn skill effects too, much like limit breaks in *FFIX*."

THE EXPERT'S OPINION

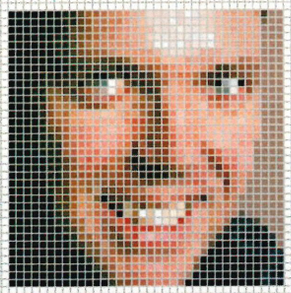
CHARLES CECIL
MD of PS2 developer Revolution

This story sounds very exciting, although if the player succeeds in finding the Hand Of God does he become evil as a result? Perhaps this could be a feature for the sequel?

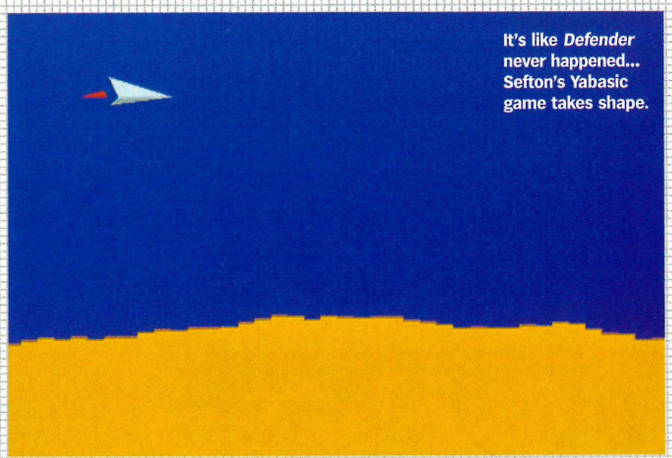
While collecting eight crests is a great gameplay mechanic, there's no mention of why they're needed to open the temple door and how this ties in with the history of Ellyssee.

The idea of battling lots of other strange groups who are after the same thing as you, but presumably for different reasons, is nice. It would be great if you weren't sure who was an ally and who was an enemy so that you were always kept guessing as to what was really going on.

Back to Basic



OPS2's resident tech-head Jamie Sefton starts a monthly guide to Yabasic programming.



It's like *Defender* never happened... Sefton's Yabasic game takes shape.

#1: GRAPHICS

WELCOME TO THE first edition of a regular column that'll satiate anybody who's interested in making their own PlayStation 2 games. All you need is that not-too-shabby demo disc you got with your PS2 containing a gleaming copy of Yabasic and over the next few issues we'll be printing code that when typed into your console, will eventually build up into a complete playable game.

In this first lesson we'll draw a simple animated backdrop and stick a static spacecraft over the top. This example shows 'double-buffered animation' – a common technique used for creating smooth animation by basically quickly swapping a displayed frame with a 'hidden' frame that we've already prepared. Presently, three objects are being drawn. First, the sky is drawn from two lots of 'GTRIANGLE' commands using 'Gouraud' shading. The mountain range is drawn as a number of rectangles for each frame, and we then shift the heights to give the illusion of movement. Finally, the player's craft is drawn using three triangles with the thruster made to flash simply by choosing a random value for its red colour component.

For a bit of fun, try playing around with the variables for the colours (SETRGB) and the shape of the craft (FILL TRIANGLE). Next month we'll learn how to take control of the spaceship and turn the animation into something slightly playable.

THE CODE

```
REM —- Set up —-
OPEN WINDOW 640,512
draw = 0
plx = 100
ply = 100
DIM mountain(41)
FOR t = 1 TO 41
mountain(t) = 400
NEXT

LABEL framestart
SETDRAWBUF draw

REM —- Draw sky —-
SETRGB 1,64,16,0
SETRGB 2,64,16,0
SETRGB 3,0,0,255
GTRIANGLE 640,512 TO 0,512 TO 0,0
SETRGB 2,0,0,255
GTRIANGLE 640,512 TO 0,0 TO 640,0

REM —- Draw mountain —-
mountain(41) =
mountain(40)+(RAN(12)-6)
IF mountain(41) › 500 THEN
mountain(41) = 500 ENDIF
IF mountain(41) ‹ 300 THEN
mountain(41) = 300 ENDIF
SETRGB 1,120,80,0
FOR t = 1 TO 40
mountain(t) = mountain(t+1)
FILL RECTANGLE (t-1)*16,mountain(t)
TO t*16,512
NEXT t

REM —- Draw player —-
SETRGB 1,128,128,128
FILL TRIANGLE plx+10,ply TO
plx+64,ply TO plx,ply-24
SETRGB 1,80,80,80
FILL TRIANGLE plx+10,ply TO
plx+64,ply TO plx,ply+10
SETRGB 1,128+RAN(128),0,0
FILL TRIANGLE plx,ply TO plx-30,ply TO
plx-4,ply-8

REM —- End of frame —-
SETDISPBUF draw
draw = 1 - draw
GOTO framestart
```

Onimusha: Warlords. The best argument for opening demonic gateways to hell yet.

K-Project. *Tron* meets Kandinsky with music you can see? Bonkersbrilliant!

The glorious, **bulging, post E3 PS2 release schedule**. It's going to be one helluva exciting year. Need. Holiday. Now…

Sam drinking strawberry daiquiris surrounded by **Hollywood wannabes** in LA's Sky Bar. *[Richards, that was me... – Ed]*

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon on DVD. 'Give me back my comb!' Indeed.

That candy pink pig helicopter in ***City Crisis*** turning into a huge baked ham if you crash. Tucker all 'round!

Sefton's dizzyingly retro Yabasic column. Today, lo-fi *Defender*, tomorrow ***Metal Gear Solid 3!***

FEVER

OPS2ometer

What's hot, what's not, what's out there..

CHILL

UEFA Challenge. The beautiful game's plain cousin jets into town. Hmm. Don't fancy yours much.

Namco calling its new ***Tekken 4*** scrapper Dean Earwicker**.** Oooh, like we're scared.

"I can't say anything…" The very talented **but extremely guarded** Mr Hideo Kojima refuses to spills the *MGS2* beans. Next time, we break out the needles and tooth drills.

The hordes of beardy, **geeky American gits** drooling over the latest goblin rammed RPG nonsense at E3. Get-a-life points, nil.

Sitting in an already **sweltering office** with tons of heat-generating electrical things whilst Sam and Mike fill in their ***I-Spy Book Of Cocktails*** by the pool in LA.

Army Men Air Attack: Blade's Revenge. The gaming equivalent of being slowly **chafed to death with a wet duvet**.

The Xbox party at E3. We don't want to sound ungrateful, fellas, but that was on the wrong side of dire. **Blink 182?** Game, set and match, Sony-san. And as for the games? Oh dear oh dear oh dear…

Brainstorm

A whole 148 pages of PS2 in handy blipvert form... Follow the page numbers to see what you've missed.

"Attacking a rogue cassette of Phil Collins' classic *Face Value*" p.123

"Dirty, underground, futuristic, mechanised cock-fighting..." p.58

"Tentacle arms the shade of economy sausages" p.103

"Brass monkey/That funky monkey..." p.107

"Alright love, now once more with feeling" p.86

"Thinking aloud in the tattooists? Baaad idea..." p.115

"The winner is the one who gets the most trackside honeys to flash their lady bumps" p.64

"Nice mover, one careful owner, no MOT. Apply c/o Box 2049. Ask for Rufus" p.121

"Eye of the tiger/It's the thrill of the fight..." p.24

"Jenny the shapely bat is not the sort of girl your mother would approve of" p.119

"Trekkies will be drooling into their reproduction phasers..." p.60

"Now only gallons of Long Island Iced Tea and a date with a mechanical bull awaits" p.91

"Red for number ones. Blue for number twos." p.51

"Digging your own grave with that tracksuit, my friend" p.89

"My falafel and daylight privileges have been revoked" p.134

ILLUSTRATION: MR JAGO

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The Quiz

Time to scratch your gamebrains with the lobepencil that is the *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine* Quiz. Sharper than you!

COVER DISC CONUNDRUM

Answers are on the disc.

1. In the *F1 2001* demo, how many drivers are included?

2. *F1 2001* again. Which phrase can you see printed on the tail/spoiler of the Minardi team cars?

3. What's the name of the stadium in the *Wacky Races*?

4. ...and why is the 12:16 to Redwood Valley delayed?

5. In the *Project Y* interview what is sticking out of the lawn behind Mike and Jason?

GRAM ANNA

Guess the *OPS2* members from the anagrams below.

1. Oil my neck

2. Sad rim crash

3. We regret a log

4. Fatal zip up trick

5. She'd go milk Tim

TAG TEAM BATTLE

Which games carry the following tag lines?

1. 'The path to victory lies within'

2. 'The hardcore 3D mech shooter for gamers whose aim is true'

3. 'Real conflict. Plastic men'

4. 'The gladiator sport of the future'

5. 'Flamin' hell, it's good'

ONIMUSHA: THE QUIZ

How well do you know your survival horror slash-fests?

1. Which platform was *Onimusha* originally destined for before it was confirmed for the PlayStation 2?

2. What is the name of the final demonic boss in the game?

3. What is Kaede?

4. Which demon can attack by sending tentacles under the very ground?

5. Which Japanese heart throb provided the human face for *Onimusha* hero Samanosuke?

YOU DO THE MATH

The contents below correspond to their title page number (i.e. the Disc Pages start on page 10). Complete the following sums using this system.

1. *City Crisis* preview + *UEFA Challenge* preview

2. The Quiz + Contents

3. The Beautiful Game - Coin-Op

4. Editor's letter x *CART Fury* preview

5. Inafune interview + *Gran Turismo 3: A-spec* review

YABASICALLY

Which are true Yabasic commands and which are complete tripe?

1. DIM

2. SUM

3. REM

4. RIM

5. RAN

CRYPTIC CLUES

Which PS2 game titles are we hinting at?

1. John Doe's cutlery?

2. I can see the orangeade

3. Tiff Needell, a blind superhero?

4. Voyage of wonder for satellite viewers

5. Spicy food leads to raw deal in the end

MEET THY MAKER

Name the developer.

1. *K-Project*

2. *Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*

3. *Tenchu III*

4. *SOCOM: US Navy Seals*

5. *Robot Wars*

SPY MASTER

Answers are in Spy.

1. What is Konami's *Silent Scope 2*'s subtitle?

2. What was the Capcom game *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* called in Japanese?

3. Yolanda Jackson – Heroine in which game?

4. Who invented *Pong*?

5. Who is the commentator in *Robot Wars*?

BOARD MEETING

Test your Shaun Palmer knowledge. Dude.

1. Which American town did Shaun grow up?

2. How many gold medals has he won in the X Games?

3. Why is 125 Moto Cross important to Shaun?

4. What is Shaun's favourite tattoo a picture of?

5. Name one of Shaun's two trademark snowboard moves.

SPOT THE EGG!

ANSWERS [USE A MIRROR]

Cover Disc Conundrum
1. 22
2. European Aviation
3. The Superhawl Stadium
4. 'Cars on the track'
5. Croquet hoops

Gram Anna
1. Nick Moyle
2. Sam Richards
3. George Walter
4. Paul Fitzpatrick
5. Mike Goldsmith

Tag Team Battle
1. Kengo: Master of Bushido
2. Gun Griffon Blaze
3. Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2
4. Unreal Tournament
5. Slipheed

Onimusha: The Quiz
1. N64
2. Fortinbras
3. A female ninja
4. Reynaldo
5. Actor, Takeshi Kaneshiro

You Do The Math
1. 26+28=54. p54(Tenchu III story)
2. 143+3=146. p146 (GameOver)
3. 64–61=3. p3 (Contents)
4. 6x22=124. p124 (Hardcore)
5. 30+94=124. p124 (PSone reviews)

Yabasically
1. True
2. Tripe
3. True
4. Tripe
5. True

Cryptic Clues
1. 7 Blades
2. Fortavision
3. Top Gear Daredevil
4. Sky Odyssey
5. Ring Of Red

Meet Thy Maker
1. United Game Artists
2. Naughty Dog
3. K2 LLC
4. Zipper Interactive
5. Climax Studios

Spy Master
1. Dark Silhouette
2. Mokoinuru
3. Exo
4. Nolan Bushnell
5. Jonathan Pearce

Board Meeting
1. South Lake Tahoe
2. Six
3. Taking part was his greatest sporting moment so far
4. A Cadillac hub cap
5. Palm Air or One-Footed Air

YOUR RATING

35-46 Ben & Jerry's

25-35 Cidrex

15-25 Screwball

0-15 Choc Ice

Database

Want to know more? Need to know a release date? What about a game in the future? Something gone wrong? Here's all the info you could ever need...

3DO 01895 456 700
www.3doeurope.com
3DO Europe, 21-23 Mossop St, London SW3 2LY

ACCLAIM 0207 344 5000
www.acclaimnation.com
112-120 Brompton Rd, Knightsbridge, London SW3 1JJ

ACTIVISION 01895 456 789
www.activision.com
Long Island House, Suite 3a, 1-4 Marple Way, London W3 0RQ

CODEMASTERS 01926 814 132
www.codemasters.com
Stoneythorpe, Southam, Warwickshire CV33 ODL

CRAVE 00353 617 020
www.cravegames.com
58, Canalot Studios, 222 Kensal Rd, London W10 5BN

CRYO 0121 250 5072
www.cryo-interactive.com
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DISNEY INTERACTIVE 0990 998 877
www.disney.co.uk
PlayStation Careline, PO Box 2047, London W1A 3DN

EIDOS INTERACTIVE 0121 356 0831
www.eidos.co.uk
1 Hartfield Rd, Wimbledon, London SW19 3RU

ELECTRONIC ARTS 0870 243 2435
www.uk.ea.com
2000 Hillswood Drive, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 0EU

EMPIRE 0800 783 0156
www.empire.co.uk
The Spire, 677 High Rd, North Finchley N12 ODA

FOX INTERACTIVE 01932 454 032
www.foxinteractive.com
2000 Hillswood Drive, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 0EU

INFOGRAMES 0208 222 9700
www.infogrames.com
116 Baker St, London W1M 1LB

JVC INTERACTIVE 0207 240 3121
www.jvc.com
44 Wellington St, Covent Garden, London WC2E 7BD

KONAMI 0208 582 5573
www.konami-europe.com
7/9 The Oaks, Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 7LF

LEGO 01753 495 453
www.lego.com
33 Bath Rd, Slough, Berks SL1 3UF

MICROIDS 0208 901 7388
www.microids.com
2 Gayton Rd, Harrow, London HA1 2XU

MIDAS INTERACTIVE 01223 522 000
www.midas-interactive.co.uk
Matrix House, Cambridge Business Park CB4 OHH

MIDWAY 0207 938 4488
www.midway.com
96 Kensington High St, London W8 4SG

SCEE 0990 998 877
www.playstation-europe.com
PlayStation Careline, PO Box 2047, London W1A 3DN

SCi 0207 585 3308
www.sci.co.uk
11 Ivory House, Plantation Wharf, York Rd, London SW11 3TN

TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE 0870 124 2222
www.take2games.com
Saxon House, 2-4 Victoria St, Windsor, Berks SL4 1BY

THQ 01483 767 656
www.thq.com
Dukes Court, Duke St, Woking, Surrey GU21 5BH

UBI SOFT 0208 944 9000
www.ubisoft.co.uk
1 Weir Rd, Wimbledon, London SW19 8UX

VIRGIN INTERACTIVE 0207 551 4222
www.vie.co.uk
74A Charlotte St, London W1P 1LR

The Shortlist

If it's for PS2, and on sale in the UK then we've played it, argued about it and played it some more. Our potted judgements on the 87 games available begin below. Get reading.

OFFICIAL PlayStation 2 MAGAZINE STAR PLAYER

☆ Titles marked with our **StarPlayer** award is your guarantee of a title which excels on every level. Looking for a truly great PS2 game? Then get these.

4X4 EVOLUTION
(Take 2/Terminal Reality)
Offroad racer in the tradition of *Wild Wild Racing* and *Smuggler's Run*, but nowhere near as much fun.
Reviewed **OPS2#06**/**Overall 05**

7 BLADES
(Konami/KCEJ)
Ninja-styled adventure/battler hampered by repetitive gameplay.
Reviewed **OPS2#05**/**Overall 06**

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2002
(Acclaim/Acclaim Studios Austin)
A sensibly-designed all-round game of baseball with oodles of hidden depth.
Reviewed **OPS2#07**/**Overall 07**

AQUA AQUA: WETRIX 2.0
(SCi/Zed Two)
Addictive, well-realised update on the familiar *Wetrix* puzzle game formula.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 07**

ARMORED CORE 2
(Ubi Soft/From Software)
First-person mech shooter boasting interchangeable robo-body parts.
Reviewed **OPS2#04**/**Overall 07**

ARMY MEN: GREEN ROGUE
(3DO/3DO)
Plumbs new depths of astounding rottenness. A shocking shooter.
Reviewed **OPS2#08**/**Overall 01**

ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2
(3DO/3DO)
Poorly realised shooter.
Reviewed **OPS2#07**/**Overall 03**

CRAZY TAXI
(Acclaim/Acclaim)
Pure arcade thrills. If you want speed, buy this now.
Reviewed **OPS2#07**/**Overall 08**

DEAD OR ALIVE 2
(SCEE/Tecmo)
Graphically superior to *Tekken*, with open arenas and a blistering frame rate but alienating to novices.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 07**

DISNEY'S DINOSAUR
(Ubi Soft/Ubi Soft)
Poor movie spin-off.
Reviewed **OPS2#03**/**Overall 04**

DONALD DUCK: QUACK ATTACK
(Ubi Soft/Disney Interactive)
More 'cack' than 'quack'.
Reviewed **OPS2#04**/**Overall 04**

DRAGON'S LAIR
(Digital Leisure/Cinematronics)
Corny and unplayable retro arcade adventure.
Reviewed **OPS2#03**/**Overall 02**

DRAGON'S LAIR II: TIMEWARP
(Digital Leisure/Cinematronics)
Like its predecessor, this DVD update is a painfully unplayable affair.
Reviewed **OPS2#03**/**Overall 01**

DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S
(EA/Square)
If this dismal racer is anything to go by, Square should stick to RPGs.
Reviewed **OPS2#05**/**Overall 04**

DYNASTY WARRIORS 2
(Midas Interactive/KOEI)
DW2 mixes strategy with sword-slashing, horse riding and shooting people with a bow and arrow.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 07**

ETERNAL RING
(Ubi Soft/From Software)
Generic Japanese RPG sadly lacking in originality and graphical flair.
Reviewed **OPS2#05**/**Overall 03**

EVERGRACE
(Ubi Soft/Crave Entertainment/From Software)
A depressing RPG which fails to engage on all levels.
Reviewed **OPS2#06**/**Overall 02**

EXTERMINATION
(SCEE/Deep Space)
Survival horror-fest crawling with design innovations which needs to be noticed.
Reviewed **OPS2#08**/**Overall 07**

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD
(Konami Europe/KCEO)
Graphically impressive multi-part athletics sim built up of ten events let down solely by dodgy AI.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 06**

ESPN NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT
(Konami/KCEO)
Gameplay kinks put this below its EA Sports rival.
Reviewed **OPS2#05**/**Overall 06**

ESPN NBA 2NIGHT
(Konami/KCEO)
Yup, only fun for gamers who like basketball.
Reviewed **OPS2#05**/**Overall 06**

ESPN WINTER X-GAMES SNOWBOARDING
(Konami/KCEO)
Realistic snowboarding sim, hampered by bland graphics, and slow controls.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 06**

F1 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2000
(EA Sports/EA/Visual Sciences)
The hardcore F1 fan will find this a little too easy. Offers nothing in addition to the PSone versions.
Reviewed **OPS2#03**/**Overall 06**

F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP
(Video System/Ubi Soft)
Good attention to detail but a little less engaging than the competition.
Reviewed **OPS2#06**/**Overall 05**

FORMULA ONE 2001
(SCEE/Studio Liverpool)
Tons of depth, but it'll feel just too 'simmy' for some. Still the best F1 game on the PS2 to date though.
Reviewed **OPS2#07**/**Overall 08**

FANTAVISION
(SCEE/SCEI)
The world's first fireworks game, modest in size, but highly original. A game of rare and random beauty.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 07**

FIFA 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports Canada)
All mouth, no football. Graphics score a hat trick but there's still second division gameplay to contend with.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 06**

FUR FIGHTERS
(Acclaim/Bizarre Creations)
Cute fluffy creatures armed with shotguns blast the stuffings out of each other in this bonkers cel-shaded cartoon adventure.
Reviewed **OPS2#08**/**Overall 08**

GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY
(Midway/Midway East Games)
A hollow and uneven homage to the past, let down by dated gameplay elements that outnumber any innovative additions.
Reviewed **OPS2#08**/**Overall 05**

GRADIUS III & IV
(Konami/KCET)
Pointless reprise of 2D, side-scrolling spaceship shoot-'em-up from 1990.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 02**

GUN GRIFFON BLAZE
(Swing/GameArts)
Another mech shooter for robot fetishists everywhere. Most entertaining.
Reviewed **OPS2#03**/**Overall 07**

H30 SURFING
(Take 2/ASCII)
A depressingly inadequate surf sim with an infuriating camera angle to boot.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 04**

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC
(3DO/3DO)
Stripped down PC adventure which suffers badly in the process.
Reviewed **OPS2#08**/**Overall 03**

HOLOGRAM TIME TRAVELLER
(Digital Leisure/Sega)
Dreadful. Avoid like the plague on pointy sticks.
Reviewed **OPS2#03**/**Overall 00**

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER
(Konami/KCEO)
Genuine squads (at last) and more instant terrace gratification with this KCEO/N64 crossover.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 08**

KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO
(Ubi Soft/LightWeight)
A padded training mode makes up for the limited nature of this *Bushido Blade* sequel. The energetic action is clever enough to warrant continued play though.
Reviewed **OPS2#07**/**Overall 06**

KESSEN
(Electronic Arts/KOEI)
RTS on a huge scale with 100 warriors on screen at once. An all-consuming work of true beauty.
Reviewed **OPS2#04**/**Overall 07**

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports)
Competent boxing sim. Not good enough to earn its royal status though.
Reviewed **OPS2#05**/**Overall 06**

KURI KURI MIX
(Empire/From Software)
A bizarre puzzler requiring two-player co-operation and bloody-minded greed.
Reviewed **OPS2#07**/**Overall 07**

MADDEN NFL 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports)
PS2's most rewarding and complete sports game yet with excellent presentation.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 08**

MDK2 ARMAGEDDON
(Interplay/BioWare)
A unique, challenging adventure with ideas bursting out of its skin.
Reviewed **OPS2#07**/**Overall 08**

MIDNIGHT CLUB
(Rockstar/Angel Studios)
Speedy urban racing, boasting huge NYC and London environments.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 04**

MOTO GP
(SCEE/Namco)
Gran Turismo on two wheels (ish). A fantastic motorbike sim.
Reviewed **OPS2#03**/**Overall 07**

☆ **MTV MUSIC GENERATOR**
(Codemasters/Jester)
Home DJ sample/mixer music maker. Enormous fun and nigh on faultless. One of the most exciting and well put together releases yet.
Reviewed **OPS2#08**/**Overall 09**

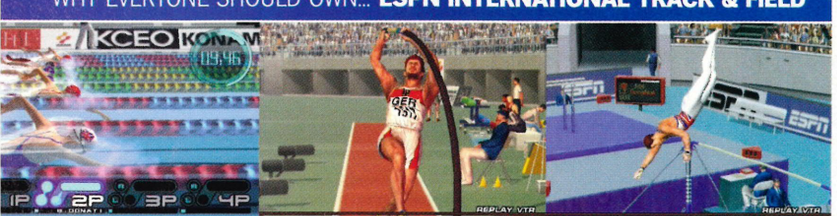
NBA HOOPZ
(Midway/Eurocom)
The most enjoyable basketball sim on PS2 in the tradition of *NBA Jam*.
Reviewed: **OPS2#06**/**Overall 06**

NBA LIVE 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports)
Solid and playable EA franchise. Won't convert non-believers though.
Reviewed: **OPS2#05**/**Overall 06**

NHL 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports, Canada)
EA Sports' perennial ice hockey licence has stepped up to the mark.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 08**

Reader's Choice

WHY EVERYONE SHOULD OWN... **ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD**



Nominated by **MARK GIDDINGS**
A full-time English student from City Of Bath College.
"I rate it as one of the best PS2 games I've ever played."

"Why? It's enormously challenging. The graphics and sound quality are excellent and the playability, even though completely arcadey, is still realistic. It took me a couple of days to master each event – it's mentally exhausting! I've played it to death with my mates and we've had so much fun, especially with the swimming. I thought that was the most demanding event. The MultiTap works very well in four-player mode. I rate it as one of the best games I've ever played."

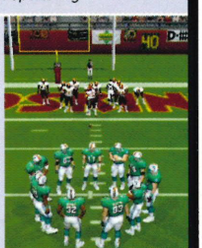
What's the PS2 game you think everyone should own? Write to Reader's Choice at the usual address or e-mail your suggestion to PS2@futurenet.co.uk. Enclose name, address, age, and photo to win a game of your choice.

Six Of The Best...

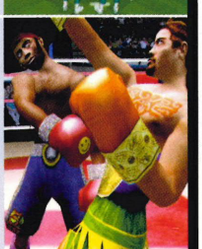
SPORTS GAMES

1. SSX
Six monstrously diverse explorable courses plus a frantically fast two-player mode adds up to pots of extreme acrobatic action. Slick, speedy and addictive, it's the best snowboarding game ever.
*SSX *is out now from EA Sports Big*

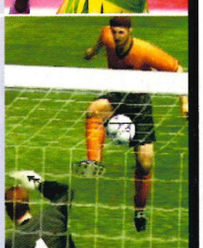
2. MADDEN NFL 2001
Packed with options and draped in outstandingly realistic visuals, this American football sim is easily the best 'real' sports game on the PS2.
*Madden NFL 2001 *is out now from EA Sports*



3. READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2
A great pick up and play comedy fighter that'll have you wetting yourself with laughter. A brutally brilliant game.
*Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2 *is out now from Midway*

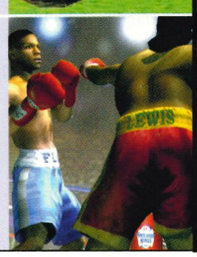


4. INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER
Enjoy while waiting for the next iteration, in the form of *ISS Evolution*. Strikes a very happy medium between immediacy and depth.



5. FIFA 2001
With glossy graphics and stunning attention to detail *FIFA* is the pick up and play choice for footie fans. Lacks a little depth, but still a late night favourite with the multiplayer hardcore.
*FIFA 2001 *is out now from EA Sports*

6. KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001
Jammed with real fighters and all their trademark moves, the only boxer-sim on PS2 crunches out a head-spinning, stars-flying two player mode.
*Knockout Kings 2001 *is out now from EA Sports*



ONI
(Rockstar/Bungie Software)
Pioneers new character animation in an enjoyable third-person sci-fi romp.
Reviewed **OPS2#05**/**Overall 07**

OPERATION WINBACK
Midas Interactive/KOEI
Severely lacking in variety, but an enjoyable stealth shooter to pass the time with until *Metal Gear Solid 2* arrives on the scene.
Reviewed **OPS2#07**/**Overall 06**

ORPHEN
(Activision/Shade Inc)
Disappointing anime-inspired Japanese RPG, short on thrills.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 04**

POOLMASTER
(Take 2/Ask)
Dull pool sim, despite some tidy ball physics.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 05**

QUAKE III
(EA/Bullfrog)
In four-player mode, this first-person shooter is the best multiplayer yet. Plays like lightning, looks absolutely gorgeous. You'll see it in the shops, you'll buy it and you'll love it.
Reviewed **OPS2#06**/**Overall 09**

RAYMAN REVOLUTION
(Ubi Soft/Ubi Soft)
Animation-quality graphics elevate this classic platformer above others of its kind. New elements add longevity, and make for engrossing gameplay.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 08**

RC REVENGE PRO
(Acclaim/Acclaim Cheltenham)
Last-gen graphics, sluggish frame rate and thus an avoidable kart racer.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 03**

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2
(Midway/Midway)
Marvellous arcade-based comedy boxing game, pitting increasingly ridiculous cartoon fighters against one another. With Michael Jackson. Really.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 07**

RED FACTION
(THQ/Volition)
A first-person shooter melding the ideas of *MGS* and *Quake III*. Only a little lazy design manages to mar the magnificence.
Reviewed **OPS2#08**/**Overall 08**

RIDGE RACER V
(SCEE/Namco)
Initially high hopes for something fantastic scuppered by jagged edges, limited size and a general lack of originality.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 07**

RING OF RED
(Konami/KCE)
A mech RTS that's fun? Oh yes. A must for those wanting something different.
Reviewed **OPS2#07**/**Overall 08**

ROBOT WARLORDS
(Midas Interactive/DaZZ)
With other superior mech games on the PS2 market, this fares badly.
Reviewed **OPS2#06**/**Overall 04**

RUGBY
(EA Sports/Creative Assembly)
More akin to *Madden* than *FIFA* in approach, a highly successful and immensely enjoyable take on the sport.
Reviewed **OPS2#08**/**Overall 07**

RUMBLE RACING
(EA/EA)
Fast, furious, oodles of challenge and replay value to die for. PS2's first acrobatic-racer rips along a treat in two-player, too.
Reviewed **OPS2#08**/**Overall 08**

SHADOW OF MEMORIES
(Konami/KCET)
PS2's most filmic adventure yet will keep you hooked till its surprising climax, while has a plot with more twists than a rollercoaster.
Reviewed **OPS2#05**/**Overall 08**

SILENT SCOPE
(Konami/KCEO)
Slick but simple shooting gallery-style game where you play a police sniper. An extremely taut and enjoyable game which constantly tests the player.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 08**

SILPHEED: THE LOST PLANET
(Swing/Treasure, GameArts)
Tedious top-scrolling shoot-'em-up.
Reviewed **OPS2#03**/**Overall 03**

SKY ODYSSEY
(SCEE/Cross for SCEI)
A flight sim with a difference. You don't have to shoot anything, just complete crazy missions. A wealth of gameplay stops the in-flight entertainment from ever stalling.
Reviewed **OPS2#06**/**Overall 08**

SKY SURFER
(Virgin Interactive/ Idea Factory)
Extreme sports affair which is just plain dull.
Reviewed **OPS2#04**/**Overall 03**

SMUGGLER'S RUN
(Rockstar/Angel Studios)
Mission-based adventure in which you escape from the cops with a trunkload of booty. Impressively large free-roaming environments and great fun to play.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 07**

SPACE ACE
(Digital Leisure/Cinematronics)
Creakingly ancient arcade port. Hasn't aged well.
Reviewed **OPS2#04**/**Overall 01**

SSX
(EA Sports Big/EA Sports Canada)
This outrageous, inventive rainbow-coloured high-speed snowboard game is packed with crazy courses. This is one game which will take your breath away. If the PS2 ever needed an advertisement, this is it.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 09**

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER
(Activision/LucasArts)
A mesmerising 3D *Star Wars* blaster with engaging missions and film-perfect sound effects. A blindingly good space shooter. Buy this game, you will.
Reviewed **OPS2#06**/**Overall 09**

STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING
(Activision/Lucas Learning)
A cartoon kart racer with wonky AI and derivative gameplay. The Force is weak in this one.
Reviewed **OPS2#08**/**Overall 05**

STREET FIGHTER EX3
(Capcom Eurosoft/Arika)
A decent enough 2D/3D battler, but doesn't give *Tekken Tag Tournament* anything to worry about.
Reviewed **OPS2#03**/**Overall 07**

SUMMONER
(THQ/Volition)
The best RPG for PS2 so far. A little too ugly perhaps, but still a gem under the surface – a sprawling epic with a highly original plot.
Reviewed **OPS2#04**/**Overall 08**

SUPER BUST-A-MOVE
(Acclaim/Taito)
Another update of a classic game, but a pointless one as it adds nothing new.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 04**

SWING AWAY GOLF
(EA Sports/T&E Soft)
Cutesy PSone golf sim let down by a sloppy PS2 conversion.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 03**

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT
(SCEE/Namco)
Fantastically playable and graphically spectacular beat-'em-up. All new tagging moves will keep the testy *Tekken* faithful happy.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 08**

TG DARE DEVIL
(Kemco/Papaya Studios)
Fun driving sim, but lacking in any depth.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 05**

THEME PARK WORLD
(EA/Bullfrog)
A God sim to flip for. Enjoyable, charming and with a lightness of touch.
Reviewed **OPS2#03**/**Overall 07**

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports)
Fun enough golf sim which suffers from a seemingly random control system.
Reviewed **OPS2#06**/**Overall 06**

TIMESPLITTERS
(Eidos/Free Radical Design)
Fast and frantic multiplayer first-person shooter. May look 'old' when up beside *Quake III Revolution*. One of the best 'Shoot your buddies' PS2 games.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 09**

UNREAL TOURNAMENT
(Infogrames/Epic Games)
Immensely playable FPS, let down by a slow frame rate in four-player mode. Get *Quake III* or *TimeSplitters* for the same but faster.
Reviewed **OPS2#04**/**Overall 08**

WALT DISNEY'S JUNGLE BOOK GROOVE PARTY
(Ubi Soft/Disney Interactive)
Disappointing Disney dance-'em-up. Go for the cheaper PSone version instead.
Reviewed **OPS2#08**/**Overall 04**

WARRIORS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC
(3DO/3DO)
Dreadful adventure/RPG.
Reviewed **OPS2#07**/**Overall 03**

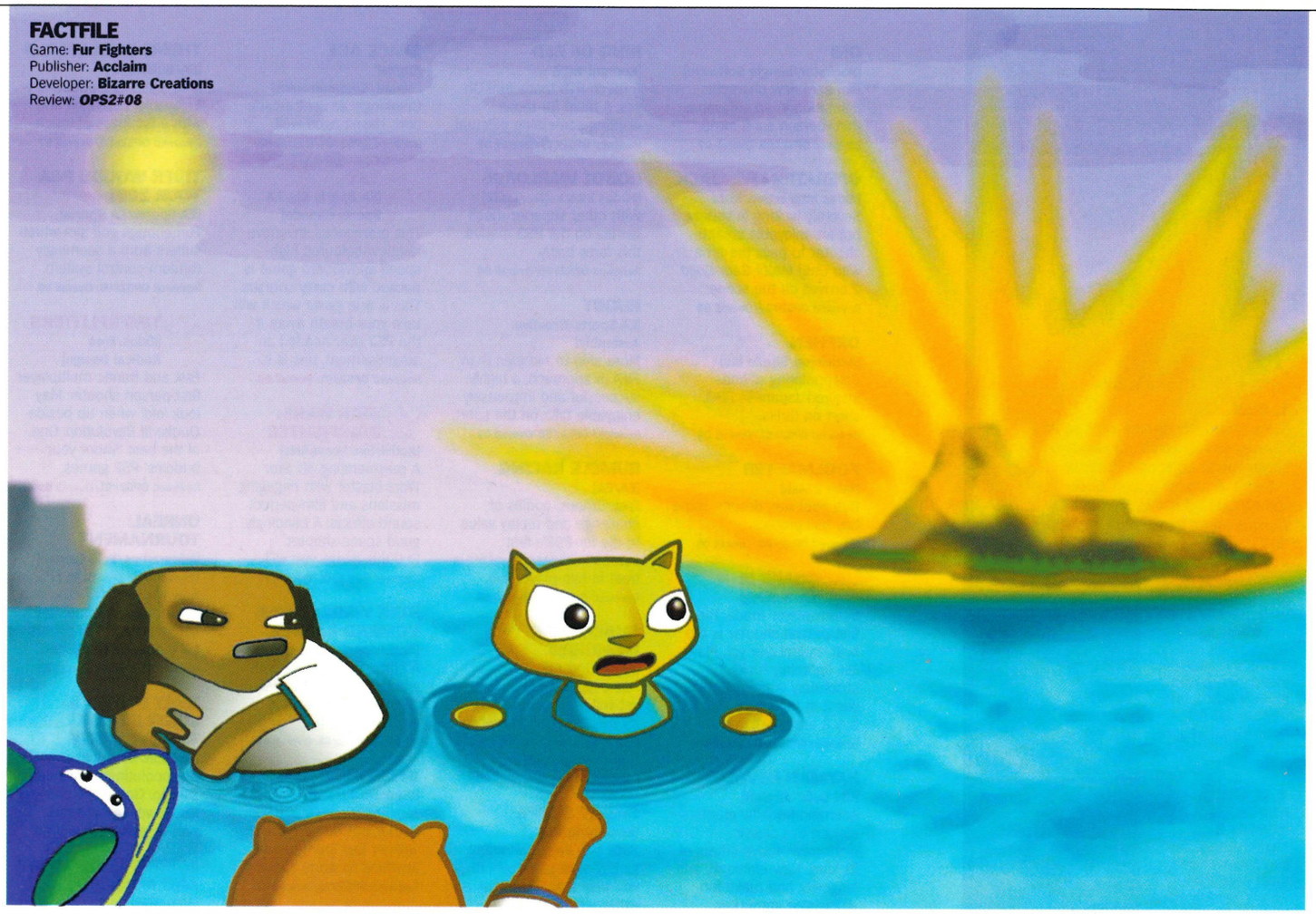
WDL: THUNDER TANKS
(3DO/3DO)
An arcade tank sim which is an absolute romp in four-player Deathmatch mode.
Reviewed **OPS2#05**/**Overall 07**

WILD WILD RACING
(Rage/Rage)
Off-road buggy racing game with merely acceptable looks and initially discouraging handling which improves markedly with perseverance.
Reviewed **OPS2#01**/**Overall 06**

X-SQUAD
(EA/EA Square)
Third-person stealth/shooter. Enjoyable enough fare, but never inspiring.
Reviewed **OPS2#02**/**Overall 05**

ZONE OF THE ENDERS
(Konami/KCEJ)
Cool graphics and intuitive controls make this a mech game with soul. But then what did we expect from Kojima? Oh, and then there's that free *MGS2* demo.
Reviewed **OPS2#06**/**Overall 09**

FACTFILE
Game: **Fur Fighters**
Publisher: **Acclaim**
Developer: **Bizarre Creations**
Review: ***OPS2#08***



#09: Fur Fighters

The Bond-flavoured finale of Bizarre Creations' catty adventure brought to life by illustrator David S Blanco

WHAT?

So, what's all this about then?

You're a team of furry crime-fighting heroes. Your babies have been kidnapped by an evil cat named General Viggo as he embarks on a plot for world domination. You've battled through six massive worlds: wasting minions, solving puzzles and rescuing babies. You've even defeated Viggo in the final showdown at his secret island lair. But as with any self-respecting super villain, Viggo contrives to escape, detonates his base and leaves you treading water wondering when he'll turn up again. Curse them wicked whiskers!

HOW?

There's an enormous game to play through before the Fighters meet Viggo and end up doggy paddling in the middle of an ocean.

Fur Fighters becomes extremely tough in the later levels, so some kind of cheat code would be very handy. Unfortunately none exist at the moment, so players have to do it the hard way by reverting to hours of honest graft instead. A total of five worlds and five bosses stand between you and the final encounter at Viggo's lair. When you do finally come face-to-face with the fiendish feline, shoot the mutagenic compound packs on his back to sap his evil powers. He won't stand a chance.

WHY?

Irrational cat-hater Lee 'They're All Just Scaled Down Tigers' Hart unravels *Fur Fighters'* unique and strangely lasting appeal.

"Apart from the welcome opportunity to kill felines, *Fur Fighters* is absolutely stuffed with fluffy fun. Shooting, platforming and puzzle-solving all combine to make up the gameplay while there are bonus games galore and even a multiplayer Fluffmatch mode for some animal slaughter with your mates. How many games enable you to fire a heat-seeking missile at an innocent-looking polar bear and watch the poor sod run for the hills yelping in terror? For that alone, *Fur Fighters* deserves our respect."

WHO?

Almost worryingly taken with these cutesy cartoon heroes, illustrator David Blanco reveals his desire to become a *Fur Fighter*.

"This game is nuts. Sometimes I wish I was a bipedal gun-totting feline on a whacked-out mission to save the world – life would be so much simpler. I wanted to keep the charm of the characters intact, so I tried to recreate them with a few touches of my own to add a little more charisma. I'm dying to play *Fur Fighters* for myself, my current favourite games are a pair of PSone oldies, most of my spare time is devoted to playing *Tony Hawk's* and *ISS* – both perfect for those long, still, summer evenings."

YOUR GO!

If you think you've reached a better end sequence, write to us and tell us what it is, how you got there and why you think it's so great. Prizes on offer for the ones that we feature on this page include a framed print of the final artwork. Write to us at: **GameOver, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.** Email **PS2@futurenet.co.uk**

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09069 107821
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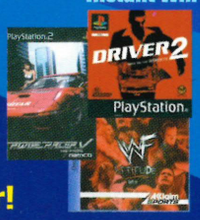

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Comes with a great game, DVD Remote & Memory Card.

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Put a screen graphic on it, or a new tune and make it yours."pay as you go" sim or pop in your own.

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Inludes Videos, CDs, Posters, Books and lots more wrestling goodies

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Answer questions then score SIX goals to win from a great choice of prizes

* 14" Colour TV! * Video Recorder! * PSone PlayStation! * Stereo System! * Stunt Bike * Nintendo 64! + other Instant Win prizes if you score 4 or 5 goals!

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Playstation Cheats

Smackdown 2 09063 657000	**Driver 2** 09063 657001	**Tony Hawks 2** 09063 657002	**Digimon World** 09063 657003	**FIFA 2001** 09063 657004	**WWF No Mercy** 09063 657005
ISS Pro Evolution 2 09063 657006	**Theme Park world** 09063 657007	**Tenchu 2** 09063 657008	**Pokemon Gold** 09063 657009	**Syphon Filter 2** 09063 686990	**Dino Crisis 2** 09063 686991
C12 09063 686992	**Medal of Honour 2** 09063 686993	**Dave Mirras BMX** 09063 686994	**Tomb Raider 5** 09063 686995	**Spiderman** 09063 686996	**FinalFantasy 9** 09063 686997

For more cheats call 09063 686998. (or From Ireland call 1570 927 540 at IR£1 per min)

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< 127531	CRAZY TAXI < 127536	wrestlemania < 129530	BAD FUR DAY < 127520	< 127519
Unreal TOURNAMENT < 127532	MGS2 < 127537	ROCK < 129517	GRAN TURISMO < 127526	Surf the Net < 121639
F1 2001 < 127533	QUAKE < 127538	DO YOU SMELL IT! < 129521	< 127523	e-mail me! < 127529
ISS 2 PRO EVOLUTION < 127534	Surfer < 127539	WHASSUP! < 121622	DIGIMON < 127527	Start < 127528

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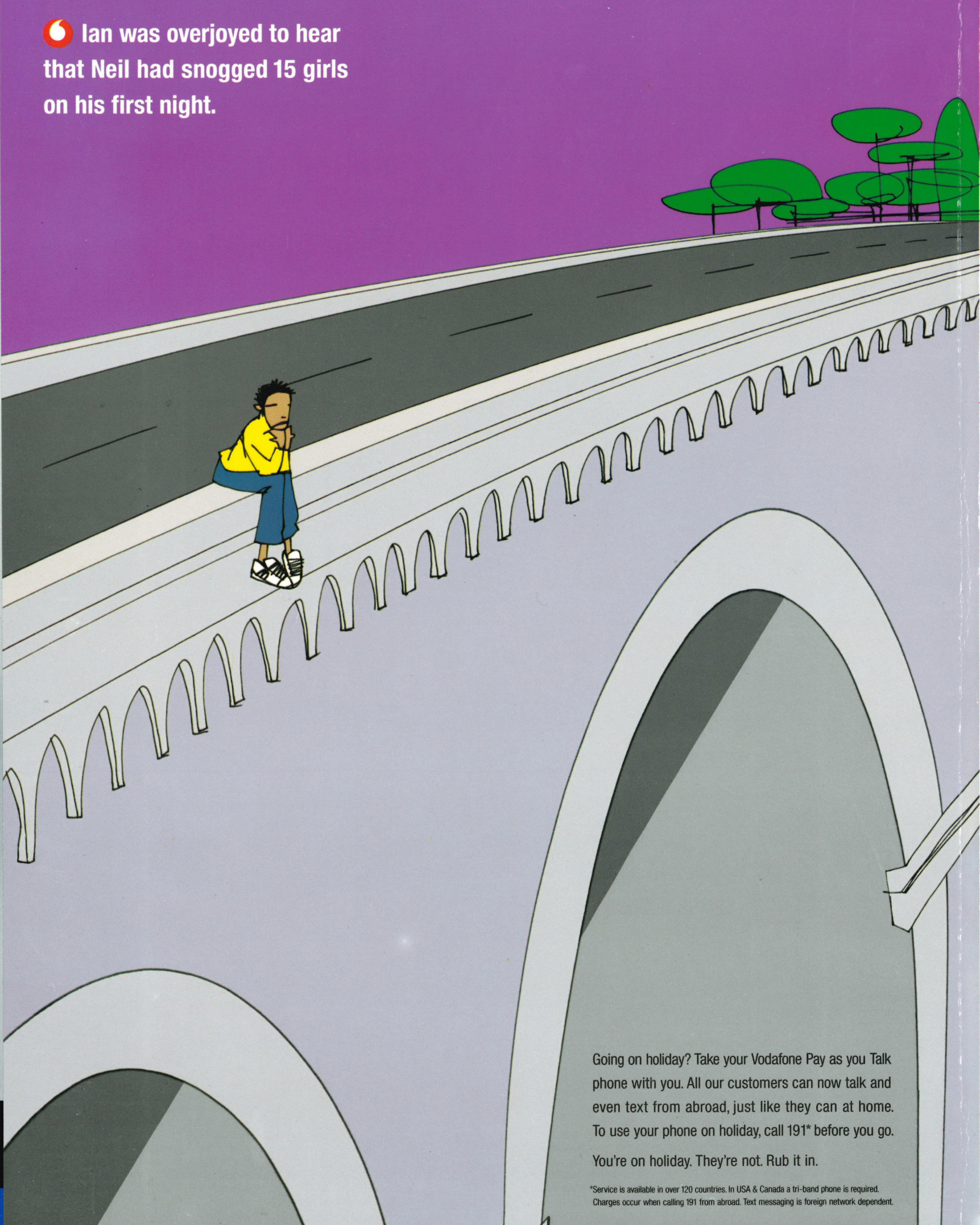
Entrants must be 16 or over. Calls likely to cost £5. Make sure that you have the billpayer's permission. Calls from mobiles may cost more. Most competitions require a tone phone. If a competition is marked INSTANT WIN then you will be told if you are a winner during your call. The Big Five-0 cost 75p per min with 10 questions worth 1-10 points each and lasts 8+ minutes. Instant Win competitions have multiple choice questions plus a game to decide if you are an instant winner. Other Competitions involve multiple choice questions with tiebreaker and end on the 31st August 2001, after which they may be replaced by a similar service on the same number. Actual designs may vary. InfoMedia may use data, received in your call, to make offers to you. If you DO NOT wish this, call 08700 101598 If you would like a copy of the rules or a list of winners' names, see our web site or send a stamped addressed envelope to the address below. Send Claims to: www.fanz.co.uk., PO Box 28 Northampton NN1 5DS. Helpline: 01604 491185. Winner Line: 08700 101597. Fanz is a part of InfoMedia Services Limited


Ian was overjoyed to hear that Neil had snogged 15 girls on his first night.
Going on holiday? Take your Vodafone Pay as you Talk phone with you. All our customers can now talk and even text from abroad, just like they can at home. To use your phone on holiday, call 191* before you go.
You're on holiday. They're not. Rub it in.
*Service is available in over 120 countries. In USA & Canada a tri-band phone is required. Charges occur when calling 191 from abroad. Text messaging is foreign network dependent.